RETHINKING THE DISCOURSES ON AFRICAN IDENTITY IN THE LIGHT OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN NIGERIA

MR. JUDE CHUKWUEBUKA OKAFOR

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY OF THAILAND 2016
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THESIS TITLE: RETHINKING THE DISCOURSES ON AFRICAN IDENTITY IN THE LIGHT OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research is a critique of the discourses on African Identity in the light of the religious fundamentalism in Nigeria. It has been developed by using the valuable insights of such writers as Blyden, Cesaire, Senghor, Nyerere, Nkrumah, Nwoko, Onyeocha, and Oyebola. Recognizing the weakness of their analysis as their emphasis on the need to return to some pre-colonial, communal African Weltanschauung, this research acknowledges the importance of the theme of cultural synthesis which cuts across their theories. Articulating different views of religious fundamentalism in Nigeria, it also contrasted the social milieu within which the discourses on African identity arose with that accompanying the emergence of religious fundamentalism in Nigeria. Whereas the former was set on the colonial and post-colonial era, the latter also began before the colonial era, but later solidified in the mid 1970s when as Falola and Kukka noted that a paradigm identity shift occurred among Nigerians. Nigerians began to see themselves as Muslims and Christians, and no longer in their ethnic or tribal identity (Kirk, 1998). Such a paradigm shift implies religious Ethnonationalism, as argued in this research, led to religious intolerance and bigotry in the Nigerian context. It is based on this that the researcher calls for a rethink of the theme of cultural
synthesis in order to delineate the communal Weltanschauung of Nigerians, and of an acknowledgment of the instrumental role played by religion as a platform for acquiring ideologies which influence identity, prevalent in the thoughts of Edward Blyden, Senghor, Nyerere, Nkrumah, Nwoko, Onyeocha, and Oyebola on African identity. This research extols intellectual revolution aimed at deconstructing and contextualizing theological thought to promote the African communal Weltanschauung. It also argues that providing greater chances of political participation and protection of the rights of Nigerian citizens irrespective of their religious denominations, and forums to effectively engage the Nigerian civil society in debates and campaigns on the sanctity of human lives, would help avert the manipulation of their religious sensibilities and identities, and possible imposition of new identities on them.

Lastly, this research also supports the need for Nigerians to rethink the meaning of their national identity as Nigerian citizens in relation to the faith communities they belong to, as the twin concepts of identity and community become broadened and challenged by the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism- borrowing Bauman’s terminology, the “liquid modernity” of post modernism wherein the used-to-be-stable norms and routines that keep communities together now seem unstable and conflicting. This is important because now many cultural conflicts and extremism are orchestrated by both inside and outside structures, and the philosophical question remains how can Nigerians resist the imposition of new identities and blend the seemingly conflicting values existing in their socio-political and religious spheres of their civil society. That is what this research wishes to demonstrate.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Significance of Research

Human beings irrespective of their history, geographical location, culture in all its aspects, and of the designation and formation of their identity in a community either as race, ethno-linguistic group, religious community, or nation state, perennially and persistently strive to understand the meaning of their lives and their place in the world. Hence, in their search for self-determination and identity, they uphold certain ethical values and principles streaming from their respective worldview. This *Weltanschauung* informs all aspects of their socio-cultural, religious and political practices and lived experiences—*Lebenswelt*. However, this hermeneutical and experiential attempt, with undertones of ethical or moral values, principles and standards, due to the nature of human beings, is historically specific and ever dynamic based on the interplay of several social forces in particular milieus and respective contexts of human beings and their world. This makes it possible for human beings to engage in a discourse to assert their self-determination and self-actualization, and ipso facto, claim of ‘collective experience’ implicit in their philosophy, identity and culture as they develop and improve their living conditions in the stages of their history. This point is clearly depicted by Wilhelm Schmidt’s assertion of the existence of a universal theory or philosophy:

“That each human community expresses in its own way according to its own needs. This philosophy would always and everywhere be particular in its religious, cultural and historical manifestations, but universal in its essence”. (Schmidt, 1933-1949, cited in Mudimbe, V.Y., 1988, p.58)

However, obvious impacts and consequences often emerge when the philosophy, identity, rationality, religion and culture of a group of people encounter the ‘other’. This ‘other’ be it designated as a culture, a religion, an ideology, a philosophy, or a political organization, can embark on the chauvinism, devaluation and denial of the authenticity of the respective
‘others’. This was the case of Africans during their experience and encounter of European colonialism with their policies of assimilation and colonialization. The Berlin conference of 1885 gave official sanction to colonialism. Africa was divided among European countries for the purpose of subjugation, exploitation and domination (Omeregbe, 1990, p.30). Africa was divided into fifty colonies. In nearly every one of these colonies, many ancient communities or states suddenly found themselves brought together under the same colonial frontier and part of the same colony, divided by their own history and by the divisive methods of colonial government (Davidson, 1994, p.31)

According to Mudimbe, this ‘scramble for Africa’ in the nineteenth century took place in an atmosphere of Christian revival: when the age of Enlightenment and its critics had ended (Mudimbe, 1988, p.45), the colonialists (those settling in a region), as well as the colonialists (those exploiting a territory by dominating a local minority) “have all tended to organize and transform non-European areas into fundamentally European constructs” (Mudimbe, 1988); the reins of government were forcefully seized from African rulers by the new rulers and self-appointed masters. Those who dared to resist were ruthlessly slaughtered (Mbiti, 1971, cited in Omeregbe, J., 2002, p.30). This encounter of the Africans with the European colonizers has in some ways, served to present the African world and the experiences of the Africans to the Western world, but mostly with a derogatory and negative status. Reflecting on this experience of alienation and exploitation of the Africans during the colonial era, triggered new forms of radical debates on African culture and traditions amongst African and non-African thinkers. In this regard, Masolo noted:

“The birth of the debate on African philosophy is historically associated with two related happenings: Western discourse on African and the African response to it. This dialogue has taken many forms and has discussed a variety of topics and ideas depicting the individual’s role in and impact on the shaping and control of one’s identity and destiny. At the center of this debate is the concept of reason...the great divide between the civilized and the uncivilized, the logical and the mystical.
The debate evolved as claims and counterclaims, justifications and alienations, passed between the two camps: Western and non-western. To a large extent, the debate about African philosophy can be summarized as a significant contribution and definition of reason or what Hegel calls the spirit. Indeed, it is commonly referred to as the "rationality debate". (1988, p.1)

Furthermore, the "colonializing structure" bequeathed the Africans with a dichotomizing system. There is now a contrast between the "traditional versus modern; oral versus written and printed; agrarian and customary communities versus urban and industrialized civilization; subsistence versus highly productive economies"; and a social disintegration of African societies amidst the growing urban proletariat due to "the destabilization of customary organizations by an incoherent system of new social arrangements and institutions" (Basil D., 1994; Turnbull, 1962; Memmi, 1966; Mair, 1975); and cultural and religious diffusion of new attitudes (Mudimbe, 1988, p.4). Citing Christopher (1984), Mudimbe (1988) also noted that these three major figures namely: the explorer, the soldier, and the missionary; determined the modalities and the pace of mastering, colonizing, and transforming the 'Dark Continent' from the fifteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century. In addition, Smet (1980) noted that until the 1960s, anthropologists, European missionaries, and some African clergymen were the only ones proposing directions in the field of 'African philosophy'. Vaguely defined, this term conveys the meaning of Weltanschauung, and more generally, that of practical and traditional wisdom, rather than that of a systematically explicit and critical system of thought (cited in Mudimbe, 1988, p.154).

The corpus of this research focused more on the third trend which is Africa's modern political and ideological thought. This group of African philosophers relied on Western philosophical tools, concepts and paradigms in order to engage in Africa's postcolonial ideological discourse. In Masolo's view, African philosophy in its beginnings served to
reaffirm the premises already held by the Harlem Renaissance and negritude movement. Its main characteristic according to him was the defense of African tradition by imitating the dominant Western culture (Europocentrism) as its validation standard. He further noted that the rise of ‘written’ African philosophy was influenced by certain factors, namely: the Harlem Renaissance, the negritude movement, and the pre-World War II European philosophical movements of neo-Marxism, phenomenology, existentialism, and surrealism. These aforementioned European philosophical movements rejected Hegelian transcendental objectivism and emphasized the ‘spontaneity of man’s ‘bare’ existence as constituting the search for meanings or essences’ (Masolo, 1988, p.40-42). Based on his analysis of the available literature and discourse on the possible definition of African philosophy, Henry Odera Oruka outlined four trends of the development of African thought, namely: the ethnophilosophy trend, the professional philosophy trend, the trend of Africa’s modern political and ideological thought, and the African philosophic sagacity (Sage philosophy) (Masolo, 1994, pp. 233-234). The ‘ethnophilosophy’ trend, a term borrowed from Hountondji refers to writings of Placide Tempels, Griaule, Alexis Kagame, and John S. Mbiti. The origin of such a trend is often traced to Placide Tempels’s work La Philosophie Bantoue. The second trend, the professional philosophy, refers to those who have been professionally trained in philosophy, and have taken up discussions on of African philosophy from a strict and critical point of view. Henri Odera Oruka himself belongs to this group. This trend is characterized by a call for the universality of the philosophic method, and a rejection of the ethnophilosophical trend (Masolo, 1994, p. 233). The third trend, Africa’s modern political and ideological thought, laid emphasis on the production of Africa’s postcolonial ideological discourse. In Oderorluka’s view, thinkers like Leopold Sedar Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Amilcar Cabral, Kenneth Kaunda, Odinga Odinga, and Abdel Nasser belong to this category, and their works focus on Africa’s social, cultural, political, and economic
problems in the traditional, colonial, and postcolonial era, and of how these influences constitute the experiences of the Africans (Masolo, 1994, p. 233). The last trend: the African philosophic sagacity, in Odera Oruka’s view is traceable to the attempt to find African traditional thinkers whose thought can be accepted as characteristically philosophical. According to Masolo (1994), this trend generally claims that ‘in Africa, contemporary or traditional, there were and must still be wise men and women who, despite their lack of modern and formal education, convey critical thinking that is essentially philosophical and distinct from the type of general narrative description of cultural traditions, customs, and laws as portrayed by the old sage Ogotemmeli of the Dogon’ (Masolo, 1994, p. 234).

As earlier noted, the corpus of this research would center more on the third trend, Africa’s modern political and ideological thought, which focused on the production of Africa’s postcolonial ideological discourse. This is the era of African Renaissance when many nationalist movements emerged. Attempts were made by thinkers “to deconstruct the old colonial sciences, and search for new ideas and new forms of abstraction” (Masolo, 1994, p.45), in terms of seeking avenues for African cultural regeneration, renewal and revival; and of constructing new African societies and ideologies (Mudimbe, 1988, p.92). Among the earliest thinkers to attempt adapting the Marxist socialist ideology to the African context, because of its perceived prospects for liberation and revolution of the Africans, were Aime Cesaire, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Obafemi Awolowo to mention but a few. They all sought to establish an African Socialism. Aime Cesaire and Leopold Sedar Senghor founded the philosophical movement called Negritude or Black Movement. This served as a reactionary movement against the imperialism of the French colonial powers and their policy of assimilation, and to assert the authenticity of African identity and experience. Julius Nyerere in this direction put forward his Ujamaa or communalistic ideological concept. In the British colony, precisely Ghana, the
Ghanaian philosopher, Kwame Nkrumah propounded his concept of Philosophical
Consciencism as both a political theory and a theory of socio-political practice with a basis in
materialism. The above three philosophers were united on insisting that capitalism was an
exploitative system. Hence, they called for a ‘return’ to the traditional African society which
they claimed was communalistic, though the way they interpreted and sought after this
concept of ‘return’ differed. Other African thinkers in West Africa like Nnamdi Azikiwe and
Obafemi Awolowo were critical of socialism; in their search for a suitable ideology for
Nigerian system of government propounded the political theories of Neo-welfarism and
Awolowoism, respectively.

Another factor accompanying the rise of many nationalist movements was the formation
of many ‘tribal associations’. These ‘tribal associations’ also referred to as ‘welfare leagues’,
‘tribal unions’ or ‘progressive unions’, were tolerated by the colonial governments because
they posed no political threats to them in the early years of their formation. But, these ‘tribal
associations’ later on turned into ‘political parties’ in the move towards actualization of
independent African ‘nation-states’ or the ‘republics’ (Davidson, 1994, p.72-78). In the same
line of thought, it is important to note that in the historical context of Islam as a religion,
many Islamic movements, for instance: the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi movement,
emerged with their respective ideologies of “Arab socialism”, “pan-Arab nationalism”, and
“monarchy-centered nationalism” and played significant roles in the revolution and liberation
of some of the African states from the colonial rule such as the case in Algeria.

My interest in this topic stemmed from my quests: firstly, to inquire on how religious and
philosophical ideologies have served to either foster or hinder cultural revival, identity
formation and nation building; secondly to seek a better analysis of the phenomenon of
religious fundamentalism while arguing against the military response as the only solution to
the problem of religious fundamentalism; and lastly, to argue in support of inter-religious
dialogue as a way to promote peaceful co-existence of persons of different faith-communities in one community; there is a need to re-evaluate the concept of "community" and the roles of technology, language and literal interpretation of sacred texts in a time of terror and violence associated with religious fundamentalism.

In my lecture days as a post-graduate student of philosophy at the Graduate School of Philosophy and Religion at Assumption University of Thailand, I had the opportunity to take elective courses from Religious studies. During the cause of the lectures, I got introduced to the ideas of some religious scholars; on how religion has contrary to the Modernity's designation as a private affair, returned to the global scene with much vitality and binding force to actualize cultural and political revival, culminating in some instances to a revolution as in the case of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran and the Arab Spring; on how religious fundamentalism is a phenomenon obtainable in other religious and geo-political contexts outside its American protestant origins; on the need to seek better alternatives other than militarization of domestic life and of religious fundamentalism; and on the need to promote religious pluralism and inter-religious dialogue. These above experiences helped me to challenge the initial prejudices I had on the historical origins and the various religious sects precisely in Buddhism and Islam. Before each of his lecture starts, Dr. Imtiyaz Yusuf would always say: "Leave your cultural baggage outside the lecture room". This aphorism predisposed us, the post-graduate students, who came from different countries, adhered to different religions and pursued different majors in different faculties, to respect each other's religion, and put on a better stance to become keen scholars to explore and appreciate religions, both as an institution and as an experience amongst adherents. It was once in a lifetime opportunity I had to study and discuss religious topics with Buddhist monks from different countries and Buddhist traditions, with Muslims from different countries and sects, with Christians from different denominations and countries, with catholic priests and
Chapter I: Introduction

professed religious brothers and sisters, who cherished and promoted the concepts of religious pluralism and inter-religious dialogue.

After I had relinquished these prejudices I had against other religions, my scope of knowledge on religion and philosophical issues related to religion became broadened. I became all the more acquainted with postmodern approaches to the study of religions; all the more aware of the need for religious pluralism; exposed to literature, intensified seminars, debates and discourses on religion and related issues facing the present day citizens of various multicultural countries around the globe, be they Muslims or adherents of other religious denominations, experiencing various forms of violence from religious extremists or religious fundamentalists. Interestingly, most of the aforementioned themes are applicable to the context of my country, Nigeria. In the mid 1970s as Falola and Kukka noted, a paradigm identity shift occurred among Nigerians. Nigerians began to see themselves as Muslims and Christians, and no longer in their ethnic or tribal identity (Kirk, 1998). Such a paradigm shift implies religious Ethnonationalism which has led to religious intolerance and bigotry in the Nigerian context. It is based on this that the researcher, bearing in mind the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism indicative of a religious Ethnonationalism, calls for a rethink of the theme of cultural synthesis in order to delineate the communal Weltanschauung of Africans, and of an acknowledgment of the instrumental role of religion as a platform for acquiring ideologies which influence identity, prevalent in the thoughts of Edward Blyden, Senghor, Nyerere, Nkrumah, Nwoko, Onyeocha, and Oyebola on African identity.

Such a horizon highlights the need for Nigerians to rethink the concepts of identity and community, which is greatly challenged by the recent phenomenon of religious fundamentalism. It also highlights the need for an ethic to promote political participation, religious tolerance, and peaceful co-existence, in order to avert the violence and terror arising from the militarization of the domestic life and religious extremism. Hence, there is a need to
seek better alternatives other than the military response to the problem of religious extremism; and to re-assess the roles of interpretation of the religious concept of “community” and of sacred texts to the present day Nigerians, who are religious adherents of different religious denominations, in their essential unceasing search for constituents of their identity, self worth, value and social order in their respective communities in the Nigerian context.

Consequently, it is based on the above that the researcher views the ideas of African thinkers used in his research, not as closed systems, but as concepts implying and demanding an on-going polemical discourse on the African reality. Hence, although the thoughts of African nationalists or ideologist philosophers can be said to be particular in intent by being philosophical concepts and theories geared towards recognition by their Western counterparts and actualizing the liberation of the Africans from the exploitative conditions brought about by the colonial rule, and as discourses on the problem of identity crisis of the Africans, they can be said to be of universal rational import since it serves as a platform for the Africans to be represented and participate in the age-long metaphysical questions of being, universals and particulars; on the grounds of fundamental human equality (egalitarianism), and in the socio-political issues such as the search for a suitable socio-political order; on the separation of power and relation between the state and religion, and of the limits of the state and of the individual, which were also prevalent themes in both the Western and Oriental philosophical traditions.

The researcher also has the standpoint that thoughts of the proponents of the modern African political and ideological thought, namely: Cesaire, Senghor, Nyerere and Nkrumah, to mention but of a few, all highlight the need for a reconsideration of the crucial role played by religion in politics, in the identity formation and all other aspects of the lived experiences of the Africans in the independent African nation states. Nevertheless, in their seemingly
post-surrealistic attitude, Cesaire, Senghor, Nyerere, and Nkrumah inclusive, were all united in viewing capitalism and colonialism as exploitative, as such called for a return to the communalistic traditional African society and other values and ideals it had cherished and promoted before the Western contact through colonialization. This was in intent geared towards rejecting and liberating the Africans from the exploitative and devaluing experiences of the colonial rule and to actualize egalitarianism and justice in the independent African nation states. Interestingly, metaphysical questions such as: what is the nature of the glorious traditional African society often assumed by these earliest African socio-political thinkers? What becomes the nature of these African nation states? What is the possibility of religion becoming the core condition for cultural symbiosis and identity formation of the citizens of these independent nation states? All of which were not put into serious consideration by these aforementioned thinkers. In this regard, Nkrumah’s self revision and criticism of his works led him into accepting the existence of class struggles in traditional African society, and the need to reinstate an egalitarian, and in extrapolation, a multicultural society in the African nation states through critical and purposeful attitude of seeking how to blend the Africans’ experiences (both of the values and products of the colonial era such as Christianity and Western system of education, politics and economics, with those of the post-colonial era, during which hugely differing people in terms of languages, cultures and worldviews had to grapple with the challenges of co-existing peacefully under one big umbrella of respective African nation states); and precisely of seeking an eclectic blend of values that could be termed African based on the religious experiences, practices and values of the African Christians, of the African Muslims and of the Africans upholding the Indigenous African Religion in their respective African nation states.

In line with the Postmodernist approach which rejects the reductionist approach of Modernity wherein religion was reduced to culture, a private affair, and little or insufficient
space was given for the practice of religion in the socio-political aspects of lives of citizens, accounting for the emergence of many fundamentalisms, the researcher acknowledges that there is need to argue against such a reductionist approach and call for a return to the original sources of religions and a synthesis of praxis and theory that would help remedy the despotic situations of Islamophobia, insecurity of lives and property, religious bigotry, the problem of language and interpretation of sacred texts, and all the inhumane acts perpetrated by extremists or religious fundamentalists in Nigeria, which threaten the ideal of national unity. Such a synthesis would help provide avenues for the possible institutionalization of the age-long search for a consensus on the most fundamental principles of social organization in the light of the social transformation in the independent African nation states. This search for most fundamental principles of social order and organization as it were, of the Africans, also propelled the earliest proponents of the African ideological and political theories.

1.2 Thesis Statement

Religious fundamentalism now acts as a neo-colonial tool to impose new identities on Nigerians, obstructing cultural symbiosis and ushering in a worldview that exclusively promotes a particular religious identity at the expense of both the regional identities and other religious identities. Consequently, there is the need for an intellectual revolution aimed at reorienting the question of identity, community and historicity of Nigerians, in order to promote their communal Weltanschauung and curb the crisis of values and reoccurring violence arising from a manipulation and exploitation of their religious and regional identities.

1.3 Research Questions

In the context of their historical origins, were there possible impacts and challenges arising from the attempt by religions to either ignore or incorporate a symbiotic blend of the cultural elements of the societies they were introduced in?
Of what rational import is the discourse on African identity and religious fundamentalism to the present day Nigerians seeking for an effective platform to promote national unity and solidarity?

Arguing for a rethink of the concepts of identity and community; how can cultural synthesis help promote values delineating the communal Weltanschauung of Nigerians, and enable them to resist the new forms of identities of repression in this global age?

1.4 Research Objectives

To attempt a definition of religious fundamentalism; together with the problems and perspectives associated with it in the Nigerian context.

To articulate the theme of cultural synthesis in the discourses on African identity, in relation to the problem of religious fundamentalism in Nigeria, while arguing for an intellectual revolution and cultural synthesis.

1.5 Preceding Relevant Researches


*Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies.*


### 1.6 Definition of Terms Used in Research

**Akhbar:** Traditions; singular *khabar.*

**Boko Haram:** A Muslim fundamentalist sect operating in the Northern states of Nigeria which was founded in Maiduguri in the year 2002 by Ustuz Mohammed Yusuf. The word ‘Boko Haram’ is etymologically derived from the combination of Hausa word ‘*boko*’ which means ‘animist, western or otherwise non-Islamic education’; and of the Arabic word ‘*haram*’ which means ‘that which is ‘forbidden’ within Islamic law’.

**Hadith:** A tradition or written report, being the source material for the *sunna* of Muhammad.

**Halal:** An Islamic concept designating that which is ‘lawful’ within the Islamic law. This concept is related to the term *mubah,* which designates that which is ‘permissible’ in Islamic law.

**Ideology:** According to Routlegde Encyclopedia of Philosophy, an ideology is a set of ideas, beliefs and attitudes, consciously or unconsciously held, which reflects or shapes understandings or misconceptions of the social and political world. It serves to recommend, justify or endorse a collective action aimed at preserving or changing political practices and institutions. The concept of ideology is mostly used in two major contrasting senses. In the first sense, it is pejoratively used to denote “particular, historically distorted (political)
thought which reinforces certain relations of domination and in respect of which ideology functions as a critical unmasking concept”. The researcher intends to use this concept of ideology in its two senses: the pejorative and non-pejorative, as well as in its descriptive and prescriptive sense.

**Ijma:** Roughly translated as ‘consensus’ in English, and one of the four main sources of law in Sunni Islam, the others being the Qur’an, sunna and qiyas.

**Ijtihad:** The use of one’s ‘personal effort’ in order to make a decision on a point of law not explicitly covered by the Qur’an, sunna and qiyas. The person with such authority to do this is called a *mujtahid* (Calder, Mojaddedi & Rippin, 2003, p.271). This concept has also been described as the free investigation in the sources of Islamic law (Shimmel, 1992, p. 163).

**Jihad:** An Islamic concept denoting the ‘striving for the faith’ or ‘holy war’, which is sometimes also referred to as the ‘sixth pillar’ of Islam (Calder, Mojaddedi & Rippin, 2003, p.271). It is a ‘holy war’ in that it is ‘striving’ aimed at exerting oneself in the way of God (Shimmel, 1992, p. 163).

**Madrasa:** Religious school or seminary

**Mujtahid:** A jurist who is qualified to exercise *ijtihad* or personal effort in making legal decisions on matters where there is no explicit text of the Qur’an or the sunna to be followed.

**Qiyas:** ‘Analogy’, one of the four main sources of law in Sunni Islam, the others being Qu’ran, sunna, and *ijma*.

**Regional identity:** The identity one has by being a member or citizen of a country, state or town in Nigeria.

**Religious identity:** The identity one has by being a member of a religious faith community which in the scope of this research includes three religions namely: African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity.

**Sharia:** The Islamic religious law.
**Sunna:** Custom, the way Muhammad acted which is then emulated by 'custom'; the way Muhammad acted which is then emulated by Muslims. The source material for the *sunna* takes the form of the *hadith* reports. The *sunna* is one of the four main sources of Islamic law, along with *Qu'ran, qiyas* and *ijma*.

**Umma:** The community; the transnational body of Muslims.

**Ulama:** Broadly designating the body of Muslim clergy. It also refers to the educated Muslim class of legal scholars often charged with the arbitration of the Sharia law.

**Usul:** The 'roots' or fundamentals of religion and law (thus *usul al-din* or *usul al-figh*) which form the basis of theology and jurisprudence.

**Wajib:** ‘Necessary’; something which is obligatory in Islamic law.

### 1.7 Research Methodology

The methodology and conceptual framework of this research is purely qualitative, eclectic, deconstructive, practical, post-modern, theoretical and normative.

### 1.8 Research Limitations

The scope of this research is limited because the contextuality specificity and historicity of my research is the present day Nigeria, although references were made to other historical cases related to the researcher's topic. The research is also limited by being an academic inquiry and exposition of the twin concepts of African identity and African socialism by some African thinkers, and of the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism in Nigeria. Another limitation of this research is the researcher's critical textual analysis complemented by a systematic comparative analysis of the historical cases and available literature related to the topic of his research.
CHAPTER TWO

DISCOURSES ON AFRICAN IDENTITY

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher intends to explore the core tenets and terms of some African philosophers’ discourses on African identity and on African socialism, and while precisely viewing their thoughts as products of Modernity, the researcher critically inquires the status of religion in their thoughts. Among the foremost debates in African philosophy were the philosophical problems of African identity and the existence of African philosophy. Such debates as Masolo wittingly noted, had links to two inter-related historical events, namely: “the Western discourse on Africa, and the African response to it” (Masolo, 1994, p. 1). In his book, Essays in African Philosophy, Thought and Theology, Francis O.C. Njoku, classified some African philosophers as African nationalists or ideological thinkers. These thinkers held that a theoretical discourse has practical implication for the national rehabilitation and liberation of African countries. It was from such a philosophical stance of these thinkers that their discourse on African identity both emerged and later flourished. It was in this era of African Renaissance that many nationalist movements emerged. Attempts were made by thinkers “to deconstruct the old colonial sciences, and search for new ideas and new forms of abstraction” (Masolo, 1994, p. 45), in terms of “seeking avenues for African cultural regeneration, renewal and revival; and of constructing new African societies and ideologies” (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 92). Among the earliest thinkers to attempt adapting the Marxist socialist ideology to the African context, because of its perceived prospects for liberation and revolution of the Africans, were Aime Cesaire, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Obafemi Awolowo to mention but a few. They all sought to establish systems of African political thought to restore the dignity of
African identity, liberation from foreign domination, promote order and unity in the various African communities. The core tenets of the discourse on African identity by Edward Blyden, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Matthew I. Nwoko, Izu Marcel Onyeocha and Areoye Oyebola would be subsequently articulated.

2.1.1 Blyden’s Ancient Achievement-Based African Identity

Edward Wilmot Blyden was born on 3rd August 1832 in West Indies to free Black parents. His later association with Reverend John P. Knox, a white American pastor of St. Thomas Protestant Dutch Reformed church, reinforced Blyden’s development of skills in oratory and literature. Refused entry into Rutgers Theological College on grounds of his race (black), Blyden encouraged by Knox, went to Liberia in 1850 and worked as a journalist, educationist and later as a diplomat. He wrote series of essays and his major works include Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race (1887), African Life and Customs (1908), and West Africa Before Europe; and Other Addresses, Delivered in England in 1901 and 1902 (1905).

Citing Filesi (1971), Njoku F. C. observed that Blyden was the first to use the concept of ‘African personality’ as an “opposition to any form of racial prejudice and racial chauvinism and as a catalyst to form a constructive solidarity among all Africans”; and “to form a dynamic political philosophy and a guide of action for the Africans who were beginning to make the first bold bases for the movement of national liberation” (Njoku, 2002, p. 272). Blyden held that the “African is a spiritual being, and it is the African’s deeply religious nature and humanitarianism that would serve as an antidote to the materialism of the West” (Okonkwo, 1998). Applauding the cooperative principles of African life, Blyden opined that “We, not I, is the law of African life”. (Blyden E., 1969, p. 39). He also vehemently opposed all attempts by the European missionaries to either annihilate or denigrate the African culture. That is why he is often referred to as the father of Cultural Nationalism-calling for Africanized Christianity and system of education.
Tracing the historical origin of the Negro (Black Race) to the lineage of Ham in the book of Genesis, Chapter ten, whom he claimed built both the pyramids and the city of Egypt (Blyden, 1974, p. 8); Blyden sought to refute all claims of the inferiority of the Negroes, and their being destined to be enslaved. An important claim central to his thought is that the Negroes were at the center of the great achievements of ancient civilization based on their inventiveness in tools and the act of writing; their experience of slavery and slave trade did not make them tabula rasa of the knowledge of arts. He substantiated the above claim by making a reference to the Vey people of West Coast of Africa, who invented a syllabic alphabet (Blyden, 1974, p. 25). Interestingly, Blyden’s claim of the Africans’ act of tool-making is endorsed by the paleo-anthropological findings of Dr. and Mrs. L.S.B Leaky, at the Olduvai Gorge site in the present day Tanzania (Clark, 1970, p. 1). This Black civilization in Blyden’s view was however stolen, bringing about a systematic degrading of the Negro, and the re-writing of the history of human achievement and civilization written to the detriment of the Negroes, denying them of equality. As he wrote: “during the time of slavery everything in the laws, in the customs, in the education of the people was contrived with the single view of degrading the Negro in his own estimation and that of others” (Blyden, 1974, pp. 32-33). Nevertheless, Blyden opined that the long years of oppression have created in the Africans, some habits and characters which ought to be changed. However, they could recapture this stolen and re-written history of Black civilization and achievements, irrespective of the long period of time it might take, by first asserting their difference and then getting educated. He concludes by saying that the peculiarity that excludes the black people as inferior and unintelligent is a false image arising from the white’s distortion of historical evidence and ideological theories. Let it suffice to say that from a poetic movement, arose an intellectual awareness and cultural renaissance aimed at asserting the authenticity and dignity of African personality, culture, religion and philosophy. This trend later took a political dimension as
seen in the Pan-Africanist thoughts of Azikiwe, Nkrumah and Senghor to mention but a few, who helped actualize the independence of their respective African countries.

2.1.2 Color-Based African Identity: Aime Cesaire’s Concepts of Negritude and Return

Born in 1913 at Basses-Ponte Martinique, Aime Cesaire later attended Schleicher Lyceum at Fort-de-France via the French scholarship scheme. He also had a bachelor’s degree in Literature from the Ecole Normale Superieure at Paris, Sorbonne. He was among the first promoters of L’étudiant Noir in 1934, a cause he carried on in his teaching career in France from 1940 to 1945 in his attempt to promote the dignity of the black peoples- *peuples noirs*. Of great influence, was the contact of African students in Paris with Afro-American personalities and poets of the Harlem Renaissance, especially in their quest for African socio-political and cultural revival. First, it led to the emergence of Negritude or black movement, initially depicting itself as more of a cultural than political movement, and was championed by Guyanese Leon Damas, Aime Cesaire, who himself coined the term, and Leopold Sedar Senghor who developed it all the more. Second, it fostered the birth of another movement consisting of radical students from Antilles, who adopted surrealism and communism, took the form of a political class struggle and criticized the bourgeois Christian and capitalist Western world. Their criticisms aimed at achieving a political revolution were articulated in *Legitime Defense*, first published by Etienne Lero in 1932 (Masolo, 1994, p. 25). Some of Cesaire’s major works include: *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* published in 1939, later translated into English as *The Return to my Native Land*. It was through this book that Cesaire introduced the two new concepts of *negritude* and *return*, which “both later turned out to be the key to the discourse on African identity and a determinant of a new course in the francophone production and representation of knowledge about black Africa and its diaspora” (Masolo, 1994, p. 1). Masolo (1994) further noted that Cesaire used the word *negritude* six
times in his poem to conceptualize the dignity, the personhood or humanity, of the black people; while using the notion of *return* to give the dignity, the personhood or humanity, of black people its historicity; turning it into a consciousness or awareness, into a mental state that is subject to manipulations of both history and power relations. Analyzing further on Cesaire’s concept of *return* in the *Cahier*, Masolo noted:

“The word ‘return’ has two meanings, one real, depicting Cesaire’s historical repatriation to a geographical or perceptual space, Martinique; the other metaphorical, depicting a ‘return’ to or a regaining of conceptual space in which culture is both field and process—first of alienation and domination, but now, most importantly, of rebellion and self-refinding”.

(Masolo, 1994, pp. 1-2)

In Cesaire’s view, negritude is a revolutionary affirmative direction that sought liberation from Western civilization. It is a uniting idea of common origin for all black peoples—a symbolic call, made by his *Cahier*, for solidarity of Africans to defend their unifying commonality. It was a sort of machinery to confront the western imperialism and to restore the cultural values of the black people. Hinting on the circumstances within which the black identity emerged as a philosophical tool for colonial liberation, Udenta O. Udenta opined that:

“French colonial socio-political policy was a programme and phased attempt to erase authenticity and original African ideas through the assimilation of the Africans themselves into the mainstream of French civilization. Rejecting the African world as a non-reality, the French colonialist sought to implant in the colonized the Greco-Roman precepts.... The extremity of this programme...and determination and commitment of its enforcers led to an extremist reaction from emergent black intellectuals in the French colonial dependencies. This extreme reaction took the form of a conscious assertion of the validity and genuineness of blackness and a rejection of the imposed western worldview”. (Udenta, 1996, pp. 31-32)

In his attempt to designate *negritude* as an African affair, Cesaire argued that every group of people acquires their own personality through the process of culture. Contrasting culture with civilization, he maintained that whereas the former belongs to a group of people
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or a nation, bearing the mark that cannot be shared with any other group or nation, the later brings about universalization of a people (Cesaire, 1965, p. 5). He was of the opinion that Europe lacks the moral and spiritual justification for the imposition of colonialism on the black peoples. Hence, colonialism in his view was meant to de-civilize, brutalize and degrade the black man by situating the black man in conditions that bequeath him with negative stereotypes. Cesaire buttresses his claims on the barbaric nature of the European colonialists by referring to Adolf Hitler’s extermination of fellow Europeans. In his view, Hitler’s act would not have been termed a crime against fellow Europeans and humanity, if not for the fact that he exterminated fellow Europeans. Cesaire is convinced that a humanity or civilization that seeks to dehumanize another is a sick one; and colonialism dehumanizes both the colonized and the colonizer. Consequently, Cesaire called for a return to the sources of African tradition by maintaining that African culture is not a tabula rasa as it encounters other cultures. Be that as it may, the role of negritude according to him is to sync the valuable elements of African culture into a uniting whole, while seeking for a synthesis of the present cultural chaos bequeathed to Africans by the Europeans. No wonder is it that Cesaire acknowledged that:

“Today we find ourselves in a cultural chaos. Our task is to say: set the demiurge free. He is the only one able to bring about a new synthesis from this chaos: a new synthesis, which deserves to be called culture. This synthesis-culture will reconcile and overcome the opposition between the old and the new. We demand: give a voice to the people. Let the Negro people enter the stage of history”. (Cesaire, 1965, p. 205)

2.1.3 Leopold Sedar Senghor’s Color-based Identity and Negritude

Leopold Sedar Senghor was a Senegalese statesman, educated in Dakar, Senegal and Sorbonne, Paris. His association with Martiniquian Aime Cesaire and Gyanese Leon Damas,
not only influenced his thoughts, but led to the founding of the negritude movement. Senghor acknowledged the origin of the word *negritude* to Aime Cesaire.

Senghor’s theory of *Negritude* is a declaration of the dignity and authenticity of African culture, values and identity as against the French policy of assimilating some African countries, which was not only meant to bequeath Africans with French citizenship, but to extol the French culture at the expense and possible annihilation of African culture, values and identity. Relying on African dance, song, music, arts, painting and sculpture, Senghor conceptualized *negritude* as a reality to capture the African mode of being and experience in the world. He used it to symbolize what the black man stands for and denote the conceptual differences noticed in the epistemological stands of each race (Senghor L., 1964, p. 74). In order to hint on Senghor’s contrast of the African reason with that of the European, Masolo cited Senghor’s *L’Esthetique negro-Africaine*. The African’s reason, in Senghorian perspective, is “not discursive but synthetic; it is not antagonistic, but sympathetic. While the European reason is analytic by utilization, that of the black man is intuitive by participation” (Masolo, 1994, p. 26)

Based on the above, Senghor asserted that *negritude* is a philosophy of being; which reflects his notions of African ontology and its consequent ethics. The African in Senghorian view “conceives the world beyond the diversity of its form, as fundamentally mobile, yet unique reality that seeks synthesis” (Senghor L., 1995, p. 48). The African acknowledges the existence and unity of forms that trace back to God. Appearances of matter and accidents, are for Senghor, signs to be:

> “interpreted and transcended in order to reach the reality of human beings..., the accidents and appearances that these different kingdoms only illustrate different aspects of the same reality. Thus reality is being in the ontological sense of the word, and it is life force”. (Senghor L., 1995, p. 48)
Hinting further, Senghor held that reality is part and parcel of the whole interconnected life force; hence, “there is no such thing as dead matter: every being, everything...be it only a grain or sand...radiates a life force, a sort of wave-particle; and sages, priests, kings, doctors, and artists all use it to help bring the universe to its fulfillment” (Senghor L. , 1995, p. 49). Action, on the other hand, is interpreted based on its conformity or deviation from or conformity to the interconnectedness of life. Thus Senghor wrote:

“...the African man is composed, of course, of matter and spirit, of body and soul; but at the same time he is also composed of a virile and feminine element: indeed, several ‘souls’. Man is therefore a composition of mobile life forces which interlock; a world of solidarities that seek to knit themselves together. Because he exists, he is at once end and being: end of the three orders of the mineral, the vegetative and the animal, but beginning of the human order”. (Senghor L. , 1995, p. 48)

Senghor is convinced that the African has a distinctive outlook on life and a distinctive cultural identity- the basis for his insistence that the notion of complete annihilation of the black race via miscegenation and complete assimilation is unrealistic. Africans in his view are free to co-operate or not, and to reject the synthesis of cultures. Based on the above, Senghor described Negritude as:

“...the whole complex of civilized values-characteristic of the black peoples, or more precisely, the Negro-African world. All these values are essentially informed by intuitive reason, because this sentient reason, the reason which comes to grips, expresses itself emotionally, through that self-surrender, that coalescence of subject and object, through myths, by which I mean the archetypal images of the collective soul, synchronized with those of the cosmos. In other words, the sense of communion, the gift of rhythm, such are the essential elements of Negritude, which you will find indelibly stamped on all the works and activities of the black man”. (Senghor L. , 1965, p. 43)

Furthermore, in response to what constitutes the basis of African socialism, Senghor is of the view that family is the basis of African socialism. However, his notion of family is different from the western conception of nuclear family consisting of father, mother, father
and children. He opined that family is a natural and spiritual union in which the living and the dead commune with each other in all its extended roots. He stated that:

"the family in Africa is the clan and not as in Europe ‘mum, dad and the baby’. It is not the household but ‘the sum of all persons, living and dead, who acknowledge a common ancestor’. As we know, the ancestral lineage continues back to God". (Senghor L., 1965, p. 43)

More so, Senghor hinted on the relationship between autonomy of the African and his community, insisting that an African’s autonomy is strongly dependent on his community. Consequently, the African is engulfed in a world of “concentric circles, bigger and bigger, higher and higher, until they reach God along with the whole universe”. Such that, “each circle...family, village, province, nation, humanity...is in the image of man and by vocation, a close knit society” (Senghor L., 1995, p. 50).

As could be implied from the above paragraphs, Senghor’s philosophy promoted the dignity of humans in general and Africans in particular, the uniqueness and authenticity of African identity, the possibility of cultural pluralism, and the need for Africans to freely and symbiotically acculturate different cultural elements and values without losing their identity as Africans. It is the essence of being, which opens up a harmonious basis for the integration of black and white values, with a view to bringing into being the new African personality, which necessarily contributes to the civilization of values. (Njoku, 2002). His formulation of Negritude, according to Hountondji, represents the extreme point of the racial and cultural consciousness of the Africans, and an elucidation of the African difference and its passionate justification- a synthetic anthropology of the African world, life and values (Hountondji, 1996, p. 18).

However, it was not until the aftermath of the Second World War that Senghor, in contrast to other exponents of negritude, called for a harmonious integration of black and white values as the basis of the new “African personality”; hence, “African culture has to
become a symbiosis of different elements”, wherein the association in such a symbiotic encounter is free and beneficial to all (Masolo, 1994, p. 25).

2.1.4 Kwame Nkrumah’s Pragmatically Recuperated African Identity and Philosophical Consciencism

Nkrumah maintained that a relationship exists between a society and the philosophy and ideology obtainable in it when he asserted that:

“Philosophy always arose from a social milieu, and that a social contention is always present in it either explicitly or implicitly. Social milieu affects the content of philosophy, and the content of philosophy seeks to affect social milieu, either by confirming or opposing it. In either case, philosophy implies something of the nature of an ideology. In the case where philosophy confirms a social milieu, it implies something of the ideology of that society. In the other case in which philosophy opposes a social milieu, it implies something of the ideology of a revolution against that social milieu. Philosophy in its social aspect can therefore be regarded as pointing up an ideology”. (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 56)

However, Nkrumah was emphatic in his assertion that in every society, there is to be found a morality and an ideology even if these two concepts lack explicit sets of statements to define them. In line with this, Nkrumah noted that philosophy based on “some conception of a desirable society” is a subtle instrument of ideology and social cohesion and order, and affords a theoretical basis for the cohesion and order of the same society (Nkrumah, 1970, pp. 58, 66).

A similar stance is taken by Nkrumah when he asserted that an ideology strives to bring and ensure a specific order into the total life of its society. In order to achieve this, it uses the instruments of political theory, social theory and moral theory, while establishing a particular range of behaviors that are compatible or incompatible with such an ideology. Thus stated “ideology displays itself in moral theory and practice. It embraces the whole life of people, and manifests itself in their class structure, history, literature, art, religion” while acquiring a “philosophical statement” (Nkrumah, 1970, pp. 59-60). Nkrumah went further to contrast two
socio-political theories, namely: capitalism and socialism. In his view, Capitalism is both a "social contradiction" and an "economic contradiction"; it is "a socio-political theory in which the aspects of slavery and feudalism are refined; and which demands a stratified society of the exploiter and exploited, the oppressor and the oppressed, for its effective functioning (Nkrumah, 1970, pp. 71-72).

Nkrumah alluded to two mutually inclusive forms of revolution, namely: "intellectual revolution" and "social revolution". According to him, revolution has two aspects, namely: "revolution against an old order" and "contest for a new order". He further contrasted the terms revolution and reforms in order to highlight the possible bearing they have on socialism. Expressing his Marxist influence, Nkrumah maintained that the transformation of a society from slavery to feudalism, to capitalism and then to socialism can only be possible through revolution and reform. In *Consciencism*, he wrote:

"...in reform, fundamental principles are held constant and the details of their expression modified. In the words of Marx, it leaves the pillars of the building intact....sometimes it may be initiated by the necessities of preserving identical fundamental principles. Reform is a tactic of self-preservation. Revolution is thus an indispensable avenue to socialism, where the antecedent social-political structure is animated by principles which are a negation of those of socialism, as in a capitalist structure (and therefore also in a colonialist structure, for a colonialist structure is essentially ancillary to capitalism)". (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 74)

In response to what could be the response to the basis of such a socialist revolution Nkrumah wrote:

"The basis of socialist revolution is created when the class struggle within a given society has resulted in mass consent and mass desire for a positive action to change or transform that society. It is then that the foundation is laid for the highest form of political action- when a revolution attains its excellence, and workers and peasants succeed in overthrowing all other classes". (Nkrumah, 1970)
The evil of capitalism, according to Nkrumah, lies not solely in its institution of a "rapacious oligarchy", but also on the exploited masses who are alienated from their labor. Based on this, he strongly maintained that capitalism is not reconcilable with those basic principles which animate the traditional African society. Consequently, Nkrumah favors materialism against idealism to be a worthy conceptual basis of the restitution of egalitarianism and humanism in Africa.

Furthermore, Nkrumah strongly held that the traditional African society is not capitalist, but egalitarian and communalistic. Hence, influenced by the ideology of African nationalism, as well as Marxism and its consequent materialist philosophy, he set out to find a philosophical and practical platform on which to propound a theory of revolutionary practice of national liberation and reconstruction, which would also demonstrate the possibility of returning to the traditional African society in all its ramifications. Let it suffice to say that Nkrumah attempted to Africanize Marxism which could be rightly branded as African socialism, though he always preferred to use the term "socialism of Africa" instead.

Nkrumah wittingly noted the importance of a purposeful attitude to the Euro-Christian and Islamic experience as Africans seek to accommodate them as part and parcel of their own experience. The African personality in Nkrumah's view is defined by "a cluster of humanistic principles which underlie the traditional African society" (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 79). However, there exists, according to Nkrumah, a conflict of conscience in the African personality due to external influences from Islamic and Euro-Christian elements. Thus, the need for Africans to seek a unifying principle, since the principles animating the traditional, the Western, and the Islamic, co-exist uneasily. Affirmative and concrete actions such as good education in politics and political life, with the aim of restoring the egalitarian structure of the African society,
would aid to recuperate this conflict arising from external impacts and cultural distortion.

Adumbrating on this above contention, Nkrumah says:

"Practice without thought is blind; thought without practice is empty. The three segments of African society..., the traditional, the Western, and the Islamic, co-exist uneasily; the principles animating them are often in conflict with one another... [Likewise] the principles which inform capitalism are in conflict with the socialist egalitarian of the traditional African society. What is to be done? ...the two other segments in order to be rightly seen must be accommodated only as experiences of the traditional African society. If we fail to do this our society would be racked by the most malignant schizophrenia. Our [Africans] attitude to the Western and the Islamic experience must be purposeful. It must be guided by thought, for practice without thought is blind. This calls for the first step, a body of connected thought which will determine the general nature of our [Africans] action in unifying the society which we have inherited, this unification to take account, at all times, of the elevated ideals underlying the traditional African society. Social revolution must therefore have, standing firm behind it, an intellectual revolution, a revolution in which our thinking and philosophy are directed towards the redemption of our society. Our philosophy must find its weapons in the environment and living conditions of the African people. It is from those conditions that the intellectual content of our philosophy must be created. The emancipation of the African continent is the emancipation of man. This requires two aims: first, the restitution of the egalitarianism of human society, and, second, the logistic mobilization of all resources towards the attainment of that restitution". (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 78)

Consequently, there is a need for a philosophy that ought to stand behind an intellectual and social revolution, which would not only seek to solve the crisis, but would usher in the new African personality. He termed such a philosophy “philosophical conscientism” or “consciencism” and described it thus:

“Philosophical conscientism is the map in intellectual terms of the disposition of forces which will enable African society to digest the Western and the Islamic and the Euro-Christian elements in Africa, and develop them in such a way that they fit into the African personality. The African personality is itself defined by a cluster of humanist principles which underlie the traditional African society. Philosophical conscientism is that philosophical standpoint which, taking its start from the present content of the African conscience indicates the way in which progress is forged out of the conflict in that conscience. Its basis is in materialism”. (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 79).
Philosophical consciencism, as Nkrumah maintained has its basis in materialism and its initial assertion is twofold: “first, the assertion of the absolute and independent existent of matter; second, there is the assertion of the capacity of matter for spontaneous self-motion” (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 84). Arguing further, he asserted that it is the basic unity of matter, despite its varying manifestations, that gives rise to egalitarianism. The objective ground of egalitarianism stems from the viewpoint that man is basically one, for all men have the same basis and arise from the same evolution according to materialism. Hence, he contended that “to the extent that materialism issues in egalitarianism on social plane, it issues in ethics, for egalitarianism is not only political but also ethical since it implies a certain range of human conduct”. Consequently, he maintained that “the cardinal ethical principle of philosophical consciencism is to treat each man as an end in himself and not merely as a means - a principle basic to all humanist or social conceptions of man. However Nkrumah in contrast to Immanuel Kant, emphatically asserted that his conception of egalitarianism streams not from our “immediate command of reason” as Kant held but from materialism. Such an ethics is based on an anthropological study of man and on the philosophical idea of the nature of man (human beings), which Kant vehemently rejected. In the same direction, he related this dialectical evolution amidst various manifestations of matter to the dynamic nature of ethical rules as he further added:

“According to philosophical consciencism, ethical rules are not permanent but depend on the stage reached in the historical evolution of a society, so, however, that cardinal principles of egalitarianism are conserved. A society does not change by changing its rules. To alter its ethics, [Nkrumah insisted], its principles must be different. Thus if a capitalist society can become a socialist society, then a capitalist society will have changed its ethics. Any change of ethics constitutes a revolutionary change, which ought to follow from an intellectual revolution”. (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 95)
Nkrumah also pointed to the possible occurrence of a transition from ethics to politics when he asserted that "when a plurality of men exists in society, and it is accepted that each man needs to be treated as an end in himself, not merely as a means". Consequently, philosophical conscientism in his viewpoint outlines both a political theory and a socio-political practice which seeks to ensure that the cardinal principles of ethics are effective (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 98). In his words:

"The social-political practice is directed at preventing the emergence or solidifying of classes, for in the Marxist conception that there is exploitation and subjection of class to class. Exploitation and class-subjection are alike contrary to conscientism. By reason of its egalitarian tenet, philosophical conscientism seeks to promote individual development, but in such a way that the conditions for the development of all become the conditions for the development of each; that is, in such a way that the individual development does not introduce such diversities as to destroy the egalitarian basis. The social-political practice also seeks to co-ordinate social forces in such a way as to mobilize them logistically for the maximum development of society along true egalitarian lines. For this, planned development is essential. In its political aspect, philosophical conscientism is faced with the realities of colonialism, imperialism, disunity and lack of development. Singly and collectively these four militate against the realization of a social justice based on the ideas of true equality". (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 98)

Nkrumah just like Michel Foucault seems to have taken the stance that a violent revolution in terms of armed resistance and struggle remains the most efficient step towards securing liberation by the Africans from exploitative and subjugatory experiences of colonial imperialism. He wrote:

"The solution of the colonial problem lies in political action, in a fierce and constant struggle for emancipation as an indispensable first step towards securing economic independence and integrity". (Nkrumah, 1970)

In a colonial situation, as Nkrumah held, two sets of actions grounded in social reality are discernible, namely: the "positive action" and the "negative action". "Positive action" is
“revolutionary” and symbolizes “the sum of those forces seeking social justice in terms of destruction of oligarchic exploitation and oppression”; whereas “negative action” is “reactionary”, and denotes “the sum of those forces tending to prolong colonial subjugation and exploitation” (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 99). Although positive action and negative action are abstractions, Nkrumah insisted that the manner of relationship between them in any given society becomes revealed through the statistical analysis of such facts as production, distribution, and income. Nkrumah also succinctly observed that in colonialism and neo-colonialism, the political decisions lose their reference to the welfare, and “serve the well-being and interests of the colonial powers and the clique of self-centered politicians”. Hence in his view, in any liberated territory there is a need for constant self-reference to the needs and nature of such a society as contained and reflected by the political, economic, social and cultural action of the masses, in order to ensure the authenticity of its liberation and the true welfare of the people by not admitting any compromise of such welfare.

Nevertheless, Nkrumah viewed that when independence becomes achieved, “positive action requires a new orientation away from the sheer destruction of colonialism and towards national reconstruction” wherein it faces its gravest dangers by resisting neo-colonialism. However, positive action during this post-colonial era, as Nkrumah suggested, ought to be socialist in form and in content and embraced by a mass party. He further observed that “socialism in Africa today tends to lose its objective content in favor of both a distracting terminology and of a general confusion” as seen in discourses which focus more on “the various conceivable types of socialism” than on the need for socialist development” (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 105). Consequently, Nkrumah insisted that “the people have not mastered their independence until it has been given a national and social content and purpose that will generate their well-being and uplift”. Based on this, he outlined a number of
principles to which the socialism of a liberated territory ought to align itself with, if their independence is not to be alienated from them.

In conclusion, one can find in Nkrumah’s philosophy the belief of a conflict of conscience in the Africans due to Islamic and Euro-Christian elements. In order to resolve this crisis of conscience, out of which emerges the new African personality or identity, he urged Africans to always put into consideration their liberation from colonialism and neocolonial experiences, accepting them as part and parcel of their experience, while attempting to restitute egalitarian societies and logistically mobilize all their resources towards achieving such. This for him is the sole task of philosophical conscientism.

2.1.5 Julius Nyerere’s Community-Based Identity and His Ujamaa Philosophy

Nyerere vehemently held that African identity is family based 

themes such as: family hood, African colonial past, age long slavery, hunger, exploitation and social degradation punctuate his philosophical ideas. Nyerere agreed with both Nkrumah and Senghor that the traditional African societies were communalistic, and that capitalism and individualism are foreign to Africa. However, in contrast to Nkrumah who held class struggle, conflict and tension to be the universal law of progress, Nyerere asserted that capitalism and socialism based on class struggle, conflict and tension is foreign to the traditional African society and ought to be rejected (Omoregbe, 2002, p. 35).

Towing the lines of socialist-Marxist in the likes of Hegel, Feuerbach and Marx, Nyerere held that man is alienated from himself. However, the reasons and conditions for such alienation differ among these four philosophers. For Hegel, man’s alienation of his self is situated in the “timeless condition of one’s mind” which is a result of his ability to “the actor and the thing, a subject that seeks to dominate its fate and an object of others’ domination”. Religion, according to Feuerbach, is the condition for man’s alienation. Marx,
in contrast, held that “alienation is economic, and that economic factors perpetrated by capitalist ideology determine man’s consciousness” (Njoku, 2002, p. 62). In line with Marx, Nyerere agreed that alienation is economic, but he also added that colonialization also promotes exploitation or alienation, which could either take the form of privatization of the means of exchange and production; or idleness when people are lazy, cheat, become dishonest and uncooperative. Defining exploitation as “making a living from the work of others”; and “making money out of proportion from the rest of society”; Nyerere defined an exploiter as “a person with money making a profit from a person without money” (Njoku, 2002, p. 59).

On grounds of fundamental equality of all human beings, Nyerere called for the capitalist practices of accumulation of capital to be discarded, as this ought to be the sole responsibility of the government adopting socialist principles to own the means of exchange and production; and to lease out lands. This was the main reason for the Arusha Declaration upheld by the resolutions of TANU (Tanganyika African National Union). In Nyerere’s line of thought, wealth acquisition is not morally wrong, but becomes detestable in African socialism if such wealth acquisition was meant to exploit. Based on this, he vehemently opposed acquisitive socialism, while strongly maintaining that “socialism is essentially distributive” and “its concern is to see that those who sow reap a fair share of what they sow” (Nyerere J., 1995, pp. 66-67).

Nyerere also advocated for the creation of a human society made up of Ujamaa or ‘atomic family units’, a kind of ‘family villages’ wherein the best is brought out in people via mutual co-operation and collaboration. Liberation, for Nyerere, is inseparable from development; and this liberation can only be possible in an egalitarian and communalistic society based on familyhood, which is also the basis of traditional African society. (Omoregbe, 2002, pp. 34-35). Be that as it may, these
“Ujamaa villages are intended to be socialist organization created by people, and governed by those who live and work in them. They cannot be created from outside. No one can be official – at any level – can go and tell the members of an Ujamaa what they should do together and what they should continue to do as individual farmers”. (Nyerere J., Symposium on Africa, cited in Onyeocha, M.I., Africa: The Question of Identity, (Washington D.C.: The Council for Research In Values and Philosophy, 1997), p.1)

Convinced that ujamaa socialism “is an attitude of mind needed to ensure that people care for each other” (Nyerere, 1968, p. 1); which aims at a rational synthesis of the social structure into which man fully realizes himself (Njoku, 2002, p. 272); Nyerere held that such a synthesis is done based on African values, one of which is the extended family. In his words:

“...the foundation and true objective of African socialism is the extended family. The true African socialism does not look on one class of men as his brethren and another as his natural enemies.... He rather regards them as his brethren – as members of his ever extending family. That is why the first article of Tanu’s Creed is ‘Binadamu wota ni ndugu andgu, na Afrika ni moja’ – ‘I believe in Human Brotherhood and the Unity of Africa’ Ujamaa, then, or ‘Familyhood’ describes our socialism. It is opposed to capitalism which seeks to build a happy society on the basis of exploitation... is opposed to doctrinaire socialism which seeks to build its happy society on a philosophy of inevitable conflict between man and man”. (Nyerere, 1968, pp. 11-12)

Summarily put, Nyerere’s conceptualization of African identity is based on a certain attitude of man, which in his case is the Ujamaa. Such ujamaa attitude promotes the basis of the values original to the African’s notion of familyhood, one of which is the act of caring for each other. United together as a family, Nyerere held, Africans can form a united front to deal with the West in relation to issues affecting the African people.

2.1.6 Matthew Nwoko’s Communion-Based Identity and His Version of African Socialism

In his book, The Rationality of African Socialism, Nwoko outlined the core tenets of his socialist ideas, and vehemently argued against the materialistic interpretation of African
Socialism using concepts which are not only foreign but also in conflict with its basic roots. One of such concepts is Marxism, whose social doctrines according to him, are based on materialistic and atheistic points of reference, which are contrary to African Socialism. The influence of Marxism on the thoughts of African philosophers is for Nwoko, a result of the colonial slavery. Here, he had African philosophers like Nkrumah in mind, who ended up attempting a Marxist interpretation of African Socialism by imposing it on the African social tradition.

In his words:

“...to expose the true meaning of African socialism, a distinction needs to be made between African socialism with its inherent traditional values, suppressed and unsuppressed by the colonial and other foreign influences, and the efforts to resurge and crystallize these values in forms profitable to contemporary Africa. In the former one can assert that before the advent of European colonialism, Africans had been living in their own socialism, even long before Marxism appeared. On the other hand, in the latter case, contemporary African socialism shall not overlook the ever-changing contemporary situation and the need to adapt and benefit from other systems”. (Nwoko, 1985, p. 23)

Consequently, Nwoko is of the view that socialism in Africa is not only as old as the continent itself, but is also open to inter-cultural exchanges. In his attempt to delineate his view of African socialism, Nwoko adopted a critical but eclectic perspective to the philosophical ideas of Senghor and Nyerere. Borrowing from Nyerere’s position that *ufamaa* is an attitude of mind; Nwoko held that African socialism is an attitude of life, a way of reaching out to wholesome community existence. Influenced by Senghorian emphasis on the rational organization of human society viewed from a holistic humanistic horizon, with man as its centre, Nwoko opined that man is humanized in the community. Therefore, African socialism, according to Nwoko, “aims at a rational synthesis of the social structure into which man fully realizes himself, with this synthesis wrought on the platform of African values” (Njoku, 2002, p. 69). The call for the return to African roots initiated by Aime
Cesaire and borrowed by Senghor, in Nwoko’s position only begins but does not conclude the growth of the modern African socialism. In Nwoko’s words:

“The African today is not locked up as a prisoner of the particularity of his culture or civilization. He is in communion with the universal Other wherever he may encounter it. Therefore, African socialism as the life of the African would not only declare its particularity but also his potentiality to transcend this particularity. The relationalization of his uniqueness of his ‘extended family system’ emerges if through it he asserts a universal familyhood. In concrete terms, it is only by assimilating positive values that it does not have that it grows to a higher social system. This it does by ever continuous exposition, examination and re-acceptance of the genuine values of African society in constant dialogue with other civilizations”. (Nwoko, 1985, p. 28)

Nwoko coined the term “universal consanguinity” based on his conviction that the values derived from the extended family system; and the sense of religion or the spiritual are fundamental to African socialism; and that “all men share a common blood despite color, race, religion” (Nwoko, 1985, p. 34). He posited that man is a family being, and all the members of this family belong to one ancestry, which traces back to God. This sameness of blood bespeaks equality since the commonality of the human personality that comes from it comes from God. Hence, Nwoko maintained that equality in African socialism is based not on equality of income, but on the “commonality of human personality”. Be that as it may, African socialism rejects any sort of discrimination, atheism and ideologies that hinder the natural flow of family life, wherein the human person freely integrates himself as a member of his community - “a communion person”, whose pride is in the interest of the community “igwe bu ike”. Such democratic equality is to be sustained by the palaver method where each one participates in the molding of the community lives and decisions (Nwoko, 1985).

2.1.7 Onyeocha’s Optimistic Moralistic African Identity

Izu Marcel Onyeocha in his studies on African identity criticized the fragmentation of the issues on African identity, which creates a lacuna and crisis of identity for the Africans. He found the thoughts of Senghor, Nyerere and Nkrumah to fit into this category. He also
described the African as a slave of two worlds (Western and African) to which he is insufficiently loyal. He then opined that having a clearer view of African identity is of utmost importance because:

"in any case, since the color, the ideological and the social consideration, each taken apart, have failed to give an substantial lead, it means the African or for that matter, any person, gets lost in the rubble when reduced to components, each part studied in isolation. The tendency to fragment issues about African identity has had the effect of creating a crisis of identity for the African...". (Onyeocha, 1997, p. 93)

In the light of the above, Onyeocha further hinted on the need for a broader perspective that incorporates all the experiences of the African, when considering issues related to African identity or personality; the question of African identity or personality is not only wide-ranging, but also far from being captured by one single attribute or definition. He sums up this position when he asserted that:

"...whatever the semantics behind the concept, term, African personality, is premised on the sum total of experience of the African people – the historical, cultural, religious, political and economic experiences that helped to share their attitudes. It therefore incorporates within its meaning the sum total of African past experiences, present knowledge and future hopes and aspirations...". (Onyeocha, 1997, pp. 113 - 114)

In order to determine what constitutes the authentic African personality, Onyeocha further suggested that some essential contributing factors such as descent, art, religion, family life, respect for elders, land tenure, and a communal system of government, must be put into consideration, not in isolation, rather in combination with each other. This is because the African personality in his view, centers on community spirituality which manifests itself in the submission of the "I" to the "We" (Onyeocha, 1997, pp. 159-160).

2.1.8 Oyebola’s Realistic Pessimistic View of African Identity

Onyebola criticized Blyden’s appeal to the past achievements of Negros in ancient civilization as unjustified. A wide gap exists since the past achievements do not concur with the present backwardness of the Black race. Thus he writes:
“Whether in the United States, a country, where all the races in the world are represented, or in South Africa, Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), Mozambique, Angola or independent black nations like Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Uganda, Lesotho and others, the black man has always been and he is still the world’s underdog....As black people, we are everywhere a pawn in the power struggle of the white race”. (Oyebola, 1982, p. 452)

In his bid to substantiate his position that slavery was not a total imposition by foreigners on Africans, Oyebola referred to historical instances of collaboration on the part of some black chiefs and elders, who sold off fellow blacks as slaves to whites for their own ulterior selfish motives and self-aggrandizement of amassing foreign goods:

“The motivation of the chiefs and entrepreneurs who sold fellow Africans into slavery was ridiculous. African rulers found European wines, venetian glass beads, French brandy, cast-off uniforms, out-dated firearms, scarlet handkerchiefs and other goods sufficiently desirable to hand over captives which they had taken up in tribal wars. Wars were fought between various tribes with the sole aim of getting fellow blacks for sale to Europeans. Many chiefs also sold their own subjects when the offer of shoddy consumer goods from Europe became quite attractive”. (Oyebola, 1982, p. 453)

Oyebola further held that the Jews, the Japanese, the Chinese and the Europeans have had experiences similar to Black slavery; however, these groups have in contrast to the Blacks (Africans), transformed their experiences to the betterment of their societies. The Africans, according to him, relied more on blaming slavery, the colonialists and neocolonialists as the cause of their present backwardness, instead of looking for ways to improve on their backwardness. This attitude of blame which has reinforced the backwardness of Africans according to Oyebola, is characterized by signs of basic human weaknesses of namely: poverty, ignorance, superstition and mental slavery (Oyebola, 1982, p. 113). Oyebola then cautions:

“The most crucial point is that whatever we, black men and women, have considered to be our achievements in the past, even if these are very modest, must be used as a source of strength for our present and future, politically, economically and culturally. But we cannot use whatever is
good in our past to reshape towards new goals and purposes if we live in a world of illusion about our past". (Oyebola, 1982)

However, the Black man can gradually wriggle his way out of this dilemma and illusory glorified past, Oyebola suggests, if he stops brooding over slavery, colonialism, neocolonialism; takes responsibility seriously; cultivates self-discipline and right attitudes to work by giving up individualistic and selfish attitudes that mare progress; become original and not mere copycats of colonial and neo-colonial policies and practices; and the Black leaders ought not to abuse leadership by corruptly enriching themselves (Oyebola, 1982, pp. 110-111). The solution to this black man’s dilemma is to accept that “he is his own worst enemy”, his search for “scape-goats” is fruitless (Oyebola, 1982, p. 113).

2.2 The Status of Religion in the Discourse on African Identity

The aforementioned African thinkers obviously adopted and interpreted religious concepts and themes to fit into their philosophical ideas. Highlights of such attempts would be briefly summarized in the subsequent paragraphs.

In Blyden’s ancient achievement-based African identity, we find reference to the Holy Bible observed as the word of God by Christians. This is precisely captured by his claim that the historical origin of the Negro is traceable to the lineage of Han described in the Chapter 10 of the book of Genesis. Cesaire’s concept of negritude was based on his conviction that Europe lacks the spiritual and moral grounds to defend their imposition of colonialism on the black peoples. He then called for Cultural Nationalism in African communities which sought after the Africanization of Christianity and the system of Education. Hence, colonialism, in his perspective, is not a mission motivated by God, but by the colonial agenda to de-civilize, brutalize and degrade the Blackman bequeathing him (African) with conditions to foster negative stereotypes in him. The utilization of the concept of the Supreme Being, God, finds
a focal standing in Senghor’s community-based \textit{negritude}. In his attempt to designate an African ontology and ethic, Senghor acknowledged the existence of unity of forms that links back to God. Be that as it may, the African man according to him is a composition of mobile forces which interlock – a world of solidarities. The order he (African) experiences arises from his being engulfed in a “world of concentric circles, bigger and bigger, higher and higher, until they reach God along the whole of the universe” (Senghor L., 1995, p. 50). Consequently, each circle, be it designated as family, village, province, nation or humanity, is in the African’s image and by vocation a close knit society. Commenting further on how the African’s inter-relation provides the platform for transcending contradictory forces in synthetic complementarity, Senghor wrote:

“It is by bringing the complementing life forces together in this way that man reinforces himself, that is, he passes from existing to being, for in fact, only God has the quality; and He has it all the more fully as creator; all that exist fulfill themselves and express themselves in Him”. (Senghor L., 1995, p. 90)

The above Senghorian position was criticized by Njoku, who argued that one can deduce from Senghor’s intuitions, that man’s being in the world is an embodiment: containing all but at the same time harbors an ontological lacuna or insufficiency that is and can only be complemented in God (Njoku F., 2008, p. 53).

An acknowledgement of the instrumental role of religion, as a platform for acquiring ideologies which influence identity, is made by Nkrumah in his pragmatically recuperated African identity and his concept of philosophical conscientism. However, Nkrumah cautioned Africans to be alert and adopt an evaluative attitude to Islamic and Euro-Christian doctrines, elements and values, which brings about the crisis of conscience in the Africans. A practical instance is his position that the Christian idea of original sin and degradation of man are opposed to the traditional African perspective (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 68). Man, in traditional African view as Nkrumah held, a social and spiritual being, endowed with dignity, integrity
and values. Nkrumah’s caution against Christianity is seen in his seeming resentment of Christian identity, which made him place his aspiration to liberate Africans (Ghanaians) above other forms of authority or affiliation, particularly as regards religion. No wonder, Nkrumah sought to establish the basis of equality in the traditional African society on purely atheistic materialistic grounds.

A strong reliance on religious concepts and ideas punctuate Nwoko’s conception of African socialism and communion-based African identity. Such an inclination is best captured in his coinage of the term “universal consanguinity”- that all men share a common blood despite color, race, religion” (Nwoko, 1985, p. 34). In Nwoko’s view, man is a family being- all members of the family belong to one ancestry which traces back to God. This sameness of blood bespeaks equality on grounds of commonality of the human person, which also comes from God. We belong to each other and to God. Summarily put, underlying the thoughts of African scholars mentioned above is that the idea of holism as against individualism serves as the mode of the existence of the African in his traditional society, which also presupposes a spiritual bond existing between the members of any African community.

2.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter is a summary of the core tenets of the philosophical expositions of Edward Blyden, Aime Cesaire, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Matthew I. Nwoko, Izu Marcel Onyeocha and Areoye Oyebola, as they reflected on the questions of African identity and on socio-political nature of the African societies in their attempt to delineate the grounds of their communal Weltanschauung. As could be deduced from this chapter, the prevalent themes found in their thought include: alienation, return, liberation, traditional African values, cultural chauvinism, authenticity and revival, definition and basis of African socialism, cultural plurality and symbiosis, and the search for an ethical
principle and attitude to boost moral development of Africans caught up in a possible identity crisis arising from the exposure and blend of values (African and Western), especially from religious platforms such as African traditional religion (Indigenous African Religion), Christianity and Islam.

Interestingly, the researcher appreciates the rational import of the discourse on African identity by the aforementioned scholars, especially as it pertains to the recognition of the importance of Africans to make an eclectic blend of values embedded in Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion- an element that fosters the African identity formation and communal Weltanschauung. However, he rejects the claim of the possibility of a complete return to the traditional society setting of African communities prior to their experience of colonialism, slavery and the introduction of Christianity and Islam. Rejecting the notion that a social revolution would usher in liberation of African countries from the inside and outside forces which impede the formation of their communal Weltanschauung, the researcher applauds an intellectual revolution aimed at deconstructing and contextualizing varying theological thoughts and concepts of community, as well as religious and regional identities to promote communal worldview via the values of solidarity, tolerance, and religious pluralism among Nigerians. This implicitly involves the need to rethink the meaning of faith communities in African societies, as the twin concepts of identity and community become broadened and challenged by religious fundamentalism.
CHAPTER III
THE REALITY OF RELIGIONS AND RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN NIGERIA

3.1 History of Islam in Africa and Nigeria

Islam came into Africa from three directions: from the North of Africa, from the southern part of Egypt, and from the Arabian peninsula across the Red Sea. The spread of Islam along the Southern part of Egypt was met with six centuries of resistance from the Nubian Christians. Accompanying the Islamitization process in Africa was the Arab expeditions and the establishment of trade routes across the Sahara by the nomadic Berbers, who were mostly Muslims from North Africa. However, according to Levtzion (1999, p.480), these merchants were carriers of Islam rather than agents of Islamitization. Although they opened trade routes and exposed isolated societies to external influences, the task of propagating Islam was relinquished to the religious leaders. These religious leaders (ulama) gradually became integrated into the African societies by playing religious, social and political roles similar to those of traditional priests. Al-Bakari (d.1054) collected some information on the phases of the process of Islamitization in three contemporary African kingdoms of Gao, Ghana, and Takhur (lower part of Senegal). He succinctly noted that in Gao kingdom, there existed a symbiotic relationship between Islam and the traditional religion, a distinct and typical feature of Islam in Africa; whereas in the Takhur kingdom there was an exceptionally zealous adherence to Islam and Islamic precepts which led to Islamic militancy against neighbors. In the 15th century, the trade network was developed by Muslims which spanned across vast areas such as the northern and southern parts of the Sahara, and from the Atlantic coast of the Senegambia in the west to Hausaland and Bornu (in north-eastern Nigeria) to the east. These traders and the ulama, whether of Dyula or
Jakhanke origin, lived in the land of “unbelievers” by developing an ideology and worldview to aid them to survive and live in symbiotic relations under these conditions. An intellectual revolution which Ivor Wills linked with al-Hajj Salim Suwarri (Levtzion, 1999, p.487).

In Africa, Kanem-Bornu kingdom was one of the earliest vast Muslim kingdoms. Islam entered this kingdom or empire also referred to as the Hausa Land by some authors, from Western Sudan. According to Kitab al-Istibbar and Ibn Said (1217-89), as cited by Levtzion (1999), Kanem converted to Islam at the beginning of the twelfth century. Ali Tsamia, who at that time was the ruler of Hausa Land, was the first person to accept Islam in 1370. However, six successive rulers after him refused to embrace Islam and rather embraced their Ancestral Religion (Trimingham, 1968, p. 107). In contrast with any other early African state wherein Islam was restricted to the king’s court, briefly after the conversion of the king of Kanem, Islam spread throughout the Kanem kingdom to the entire population. Based on a controversy which arose in the Kanem Empire in the middle of the fourteenth century, regarding a break away from the tradition of observing the rituals concerning the mune, the Saifawa ruling dynasty relocated to Bornu. Its capital was later established at N’Gazargamu during the reign of Ali Ghaji ibd Dunama (r. 1476-1506), who was also the first caliph of the Bornu caliphate. Under the reign of Mai Idris Alanwa (r.1570-1603), the Bornu caliphate attained its apogee; all the state dignitaries were Muslims and the center for Islamic studies was located in the capital, N’Gazargamu. Privileges were given to the qadis, imams, and the teachers, amidst exemption from paying taxes; and the Sharia law was made the official law of the state binding on the entire population. From the 15th till the 18th century, the Kanem-Bornu Empire expanded from all its boundaries -Eastern, Southern, Western, and Northern.

The Kano Chronicle, written in the mid-seventeenth century, remains the principal source for the development of Islam in Hausaland. It offers a chronological framework for the commencement of a trade route to Hausaland in the fourteenth century by the Wangara, a
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group of *Mandingue* Muslim traders from Mali. The *Wangara* ulama that came with these *Wangara* traders are regarded in Kano tradition as the first to bring Islam to Kano. The coming of Islam coincided with the shift of the *Saifawa* dynasty from Kanem to Bornu that was closer to Hausaland; another source of Muslim influence on Kano alongside the arrival of the *Wangara* ulama (Levtzion, 1999, pp.494 ff.). In the first generation of Islam in Kano, these *Wangara* ulama gained prominence and influence. A mosque was built wherein the chief of Kano prayed. Official appointments were given to the leading ulama to serve the king and Muslim community. These ulamas were able to withstand the opposition from the local priests, the most remarkable of which was there being able to prove the efficacy of Islam as a new religion, by providing a superior magical power through Muslim prayers that aided the King’s conquest in a war. However, Islam later temporarily lost its ground when the King failed in a battle and returned to the local (traditional) priests who gave him the sole alternative of restoring the traditional rites destroyed by his father as the grounds for overcoming his enemies. Accepting such a demand, the King won the battle. The second generation remained faithful to their traditional religion, but the third completely reverted to Islam. In Kano, the princes received basic Qur’anic teaching from their personal masters, who were mostly the leading *Wangara* ulamas. A controversy later emerged over being a warrior and a warrior chief at same time. Faced with such problem, Umar, the king of Kano abdicated his throne in order to remain a faithful Muslim. In the mid-fifteenth century, a higher level of Islamic learning than those of the *Wangara* ulama was introduced by the *Toronkawa*, a group of settled Muslim scholars. The *Toronkawa* lived in rural enclaves. Though they were skilled in horsemanship and warfare, they neither rendered any religious services to the local rulers, nor participated in non-Muslim ceremonies, not to mention of integrating them into the political system although they were in communication with the local rulers. It was this mental and physical distance that generated tensions that culminated in a
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*jihad* aimed at reform (Levtzion, 1999). Islam became integrated into the Hausa religious and socio-cultural life without breaking away from the past— as is symbolized by the cutting of the sacred tree under which the original mosque building was erected. This jihad is linked with Muhammad Rumfa, a reformist Kano king alongside his contemporaries and reformist kings Askiya Muhammad in Songhay and Ali Ghaji in Bornu. In his visit to Kano in 1491, Abd al-Karim al-Maghili articulated the reformist ideology. During the reign of Muhammad Rumfa (1463 - 1499), Islam had penetrated Kano, which was then inhabited by the Hausa people called Maguzawa. However, it was only after the conquest by Uthman dan Fodio (1802 - 1817) that Islam began to spread among the Maguzawa people, of whom, an estimated half of their population had accepted Islam by the time of the British arrival in that area.

In the sixteenth century, the level of Muslim scholarship among the kings of Kano became improved and reached its apex comparable to the period of Mai Idris in Bornu. Until the end of the eighteenth century, scholars from Timbuktu visited, taught and contributed to the rise of local Hausa scholarship in both Kano and Katsina on their way to Mecca for a pilgrimage. There were non-Muslims who became absorbed in the Hausa state and culture. They became known as the *Maguzawa*, a name derived from the Arabic term *majus*, meaning “the Magi”. Although the *Maguzawa* were of diverse ethnic origins they share a common Hausa language and culture. Consequently, among the majority of the peasants, Islam was perceived as one cult among many. Worthy of mention, is that prior to the arrival of Islam, the *Maguzawa* people held some beliefs, namely:

“[They] had a belief in Allah as the Supreme Being who could be approached or invoked through other deities. They also had a belief on the Last Day... Allah will judge everyone, punishing and rewarding each person accordingly. [They] also believed in Spirits (*Iskooki*) who act on behalf of Allah, inflicting on or removing suffering from people...therefore they invoked spirits...there were indications that the *Maguzawa* people believed in a place where the spirit of their ancestors would have to wait until the Day of Resurrection”. (Tanko, 2008)
Tanko further noted that Islam appealed to the Maguzawa people because the Muslim beliefs were in agreement with those of the Maguzawa people. However, he also noted, that there later arose a categorization of spirits (Iskooki) as either black or white. They held that the white spirits were good and lived in the city, and compared them to the Muslims who lived in the city; whereas the black spirit was seen as being purely wicked or evil and represented the Maguzawa who lived in the bush or outside the city. Based on this, some Maguzawa who accepted Islam moved into the city to enjoy the blessings of the white spirit. With this, the stage was set for superiority and inferiority complexes. Muslims and the Maguzawa converts living in the city considered themselves as superior to the Maguzawa people dwelling outside the city. This in Tanko’s view accounts for the reason why a greater number of the Maguzawa dwelling outside the city have been largely abandoned, left uneducated and are economically backward. Hinting on the cult of the bori spirits, Levtzion noted that it was one of the most widespread pre-Islamic practices that were Islamized and survived in Hausaland among women (Levtzion, 1999).

The Kano chronicles also contains a record of repeated attacks by the Jukun, referred to as the Kworarafa by its author, during which the Kano kings sought relief in ritual and magic from both “non-Muslim” Maguzawa priests and local Muslims. The spread of Islam was welcomed by the different Hausa city-states in their own unique way. By the end of the eighteenth century, the rulers and population of Katsina, which had the largest Wangara community, were mostly Islamized, but the legitimacy of the dynasty was based on the traditional belief system. Rulers more committed to Islam were genuinely torn between two systems of religious beliefs. Also, the attempts to revive the Sunna and to impose the Sharia were opposed by the slaves (Levtzion, 1999, p.497). The ulama alienated from the rulers relocated to the periphery of Kano, wherein they gained autonomy, built mosques and prayed. The numbers of people attending the mosques in these small towns to pray were much more
in number compared with those visiting the mosques in the capital, something initially ignored by the rulers. Later on, these small towns joined together and became the supporters of the jihad of Uthman dan Fodio (1755-1815); who listed the “sins” of the rulers that justified the jihad as follows:

“the veneration of trees and rocks by making sacrifices and pouring libations; the divination by sand, stars, spirits, and by the sound of the movements of birds; consultation with soothsayers; use of magic; and writing of the names of Allah or extracts of the Quran on polluted things, such as the bones of the dead, and drinking the solution when it is washed off and mixed with snake skin. All these “sins” may be counted in many Muslim societies in Africa, representing the surviving pre-Islamic tradition”. (Levtzion, 1999, p.497)

Levtzion further opined that most Muslim scholars failed to challenge this ambiguous situation which reached the dramatic point of no return in the rise of Islamic militancy, a period during which the militants introduced the concept of takfîr by declaring as infidels those who had previously been considered Muslims. Further details on the rise of extremist Islamic militancy or fundamentalism would be attempted in the subsequent paragraphs.

3.2 History of Christianity in Nigeria

Christianity came into West Africa through the Portuguese missionaries, who were part of Prince Henry’s expedition under the royal patronage of his father King John I. Underlying this expedition was the quest to explore the Western coast of Africa; to establish a strong military base; to establish and improve trade links to the interests of Portugal; to assess the real strength of the Muslim rulers in Africa who were perceived as threats to the Portuguese interests; and to discover the isolated Christian kingdoms believed to be existing in some parts of Africa (Ogunrinade & Ogbole, 2013). However, in the Nigerian historical context, this first serious presence of Christendom was a short but important encounter between the Portuguese and the Kingdoms of Warri and Benin in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. This venture, however, was lost with the dwindling of the influence of Portuguese
in the international arena (Ukwuegbu, 2008, p. 34). In the same vein, citing Ajayi (1965), Ogunrinade et al. (2013) observed that the Oba of Benin’s disinterestedness and his dual dismissal of the Portuguese missionaries in 1515 and 1538 contributed to this lapse. A similar but failed attempt to propagate Christianity in Benin was made by the Capuchins (Italian and Spanish). These Capuchins were optimistic that converting the king, whom they scarcely met and of whom his subjects were loyal to, would entail gaining a widespread conversion in the kingdom. However, this dream was short lived due to their dismissal in 1651 from Benin Kingdom for attempting to hinder a traditional festival involving a human sacrifice (Ogunrinade & Ogbole, 2013).

Of great importance to the history of Christian missions in West Africa is Sierra Leone, freed slaves and Yoruba language. Sierra Leone was the point of entry and settlement of the first Christian missionaries alongside the already baptized and freed slaves belonging to the Nova Scotia group, who were later joined by the Maroon group from Jamaica. It was through this avenue that the first African Christian church came into existence in Sierra Leone. According to Fyfe (1962) and Odudoye (1969) as cited by (Ogunrinade & Ogbole, 2013), the greater majority of the freed slaves that returned to Free Town were the Aku people of Yoruba tribe, who spoke the Yoruba language and turned out to be the largest cohesive ethnic group there. This motivated the Church Missionary Societies in Sierra Leone to study the Yoruba language, Bishop Ajayi Crowther’s translation of the Holy Bible into Yoruba, and the founding of the first African Christian church with the first service held in Yoruba on January 3, 1844. The earliest Christian missions implemented their strategies of Christian villages, farm settlement, education, relief services to locals during war times, recourse to the Royal Niger Corporation (R.N.C.) to avert one community being subdued by another one, and the conversion of kings, chiefs and elites targeted at widespread conversion of their loyal subjects. The first Christian village was set up by the Wesleyan Methodists and
the C.M.S. around Badagry in 1842. These missionaries built the Mission House and had it surrounded by other houses for headmasters, interpreters, boarders, recaptives and other refugees, workshops, schools and church buildings. Emigrants and converts also built their houses around the Mission House to avert the possible persecution and allurements in the open village communities. This brought about the introduction of Christianity amidst European building style and town planning. A concrete example is the settling of emigrants from Calabar on the Mission Hill at Duke Town. (Obi, 1985). Christian village experiment soon spread across Nigeria via several missions using Badagry as their point of entry. However, a lasting Christian presence in Nigeria could be traced back to the early missionary endeavors of the 19th and 20th centuries (Ukwuegbu, 2008). A hint on the church missions that flourished then would be attempted in the subsequent paragraphs.

The Methodist church via the Wesleyan Missionary Society was the first church mission to send her first missionary, in the person of Rev. Thomas Burch Freeman to Badagry on 24th September, 1842. Next was the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) who sent Henry Townsed amidst others to Badagry on 17th December, 1842. Ayande (1966) as cited by Ogunrinade et.al (2013) noted that the C.M.S. activities prospered in Abeokuta. There was also a symbiotic relationship between them and the Egba rulers who relied on C.M.S.'s links to the British government to guard against Dahomey. However, prior to Townsend's arrival at Abeokuta, refugees displaced from Egba towns due to the Owu war started settling in Abeokuta as from 1830. Recaptives from Sierra Leone also later came to settle there by 1842.

The Presbyterian Church from Scotland, known as the Scotland Missionary Society, was the third missionary society to commence its works in Calabar, Nigeria in 1846. They sent Rev. Hope Masterdom Waddel. The chiefs of Duke and Creek towns thought that
missionary presence would increase their trade opportunities, and avail their children the opportunity of becoming literate (Ogunrinade & Ogbole, 2013).

The Baptist mission was the next to send Thomas T. Bowen, one of the commissioned missionaries sent to Central Africa (Northern Nigeria). Arriving Badagry, Lagos, Bowen’s quest to reach his destination Igboho, was hindered by the wars in the Yorubaland, leaving him the sole option of staying in Abeokuta. During his stay, Bowen learnt the Yoruba language, became a guest to the king of Ketu and the chief of Ijaye.

After the Baptists came the Society of African Missions (S.M.A.) Vicariate Apostolic of Dahomey. The S.M.A. facilitated the establishment of the catholic mission in Nigeria. An Italian priest, Father Francisco Borgheo, led the first team of missionaries to Dahomey in 1861. Arriving Lagos on February 17, 1862, Borgheo and other missionaries later established Mission farm settlements, and equipped locals with both vocational and agricultural skills. This was aimed at fostering the creation of independent minds that were resourceful to themselves and the communities they belonged to. The pioneer French Holy Ghost missionaries (C.S.S.P.) arrived at Onitsha (the Eastern part of Nigeria) in 1885 to meet the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) missionaries who were already there 28 years earlier; and above all they came into a territory occupied by the British trading company – the Royal Niger Company (R.N.C.). The R.N.C. was deeply involved in the trade (slave trade and palm oil etc.), and politics of the area, antagonizing many local communities. The introduction of the Christian villages by these missionaries served as the nucleus and springboard for evangelization (Obi, 1985). Pope Leo XIII through his Encyclical Letter In Plumis of May 5, 1888, gave a fiery impetus to the French Anti-Slavery Society in France. The Pope ordered the missionaries to wipe out slavery as a form of man’s inhumanity to man via there evangelizing missions in Africa. Funds were made available to the missionaries through the collections made in Catholic churches all over the world on every January 6. Based on this,
many French Catholic Organizations such as L’Ouvrés de Saint Enfance, La Propagation de la Foi and La Société Anti-esclavagiste etc. built and ran 30 *villages de liberte* in the French colonies of Africa. They bought back slaves and restored their sense of dignity and freedom. These Christian villages being prototypes of the *village de liberte*, as they were, provided a place of liberty for the uprooted victims of the slave trade. The first Onitsha Christian village was modeled after the *village de liberte* in Western Sudan. It was built in the late 1886, at Onitsha- the site of the present Holy Trinity Cathedral by Fr. Lutz. This Christian village, as Obi C.A. (1985) noted, was a “community of freed-slaves, the outcasts, breach-babies, runaway slaves, and the flotsam and jetsam outlawed by violations of Igbo customs and traditional laws” (pp. 22 - 24). These missionaries bought back the slaves in order to restore their full human dignities and avert them from being sold again into slavery or used for human sacrifice by some chiefs. However, in May 1892, the Holy Ghost missionaries were in a dilemma to either take sides with the R.N.C. as they attacked the Aguleri locals or to defend the Aguleri locals. Fr. Lutz and other missionaries ended up providing aids to help resettle the affected Aguleri locals. This accounted not only for the defection of Anglicans to Catholicism, but also the gaining of more converts and the spread of Catholicism to towns like Nteje, Obosi and Dunukofia etc. Famous among these converts was King Idigo of Aguleri in December, 1981. King Samuel Okosi of Onitsha and other notable chiefs in Nteje later became Christian converts. According to Fatokun (2005), as cited by (Ogunrinade & Ogbole, 2013), the missionary zeal of the Holy Ghost Missionaries further met with progress, as seen in the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Province of Onitsha (in charge of all the Eastern part of Nigeria) in 1889, the Lokoja station in 1884, and an Ecclesiastical Province of Kaduna in 1911. Although the Christian village experiment later stopped due to the insufficient funds, problem of land ownership and implicit political threat it posed to the British government who became suspicious of the right of the church missions to allot pieces
of land to the Christian village occupants; it provided the basis for the establishment of Catholicism in Nigeria (Obi, 1985). Missionary work in Nigeria was later extended to the founding of parishes, the establishment of vocational institutions (seminaries, monasteries, novitiates and convents), and the provision of educational and healthcare facilities; accounting for the many parishes, mission schools, training centers and hospitals existing in several parts of Nigeria till date.

Following the advent of the Holy Ghost Fathers missions was the founding of the Qua Iboe church by Samuel A. Bill in the Qua Iboe river valley in Eastern Nigeria in 1887. This was later followed by the sending of Walter Gowans, Thomas Kent and Rowland Bingham to set up a church in the Northern region of Nigeria by the Sudan Interior Missions (S.I.M.). The Sudan United Mission later aided S.I.M. to establish six churches. However, other African Independent Churches later sprang up from one of these earlier mentioned churches on account of conduct they deemed discriminatory and unsatisfactory. Some of those churches include the Native Baptist Church, the United African Church (U.A.N.), the Church of Bethel, and the United African Methodist Church.

The history of Christianity in Nigeria would not be complete without hinting on the surfacing of many Pentecostal churches in the Nigerian religious scene as from the 1900s, most of which sprang up out of the need of their adherents to express their Africanity in Christianity. The Christ Army Church was introduced around 1910. In 1918, as Anderson (2001) and Gayai (2002) noted, the Precious Stone (Diamond) Society, initially a praying ministry founded within the Anglican tradition, later separated and affiliated herself with the Faith Tabernacle Church based in Philadelphia (Pew Research, 2006). In the mid and late 1920s, a group of Aladura (praying people) churches emerged namely: the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim Society (1925), and the Church of the Lord (1925). In the 1930s, the Welsh Apostolic Church was founded in Nigeria in 1931, followed by the
Assemblies of God in 1939, the Independent Church of Christ in 1941, the Celestial Church of Christ in the 1950s, and the Four Square Gospel Church in 1954. This spring up of "faith-healing" churches and prayer houses also touched towns in Oyi Local Government Area of Anambra State; one of such towns is Nteje. Christ Holy Church was established there in 1964, Saviour Apostolic Church in 1966, New Apostles Church, Universal Church of Christ and Holy Sabbath in 1967, and the United Church of Christ in 1979 (Nwagbogu, 1985).

3.3 African Traditional Religion

The term African Traditional Religion (ATR) was coined by G. Parrinder; as a term enjoys no univocal definition and nomenclature. Such a difficulty according to Nnyombi emanates from the integral or holistic character of the religion wherein no dichotomy exists between the religious (sacred) and the profane, and emphasis is on practice and living rather than dogma or doctrines (Nnyombi, 2016). In the same vein, Isizor noted that adherents of the religion never gave it a name because for them it is "a way of life that pervades every aspect of human endeavor from cradle to grave. It is a way of living: way of eating, way of working, way of dancing, way of praying, way of offering sacrifices, etc. There is hardly any activity in life that is separated from its religious implications" (Isizor, 2016).

Moreover, an unsettled debate on whether the nomenclature of the term should be either in the singular or plural still exists among scholars. These scholars fall into two camps. The first camp led by E. Idowu insists that the nomenclature ought to be in the singular, hence 'African Traditional Religion'. The second camp championed by J.S. Mbiti, supported by scholars like Benjamin Ray and Ikenga Metuh, are in support of the plural nomenclature, hence 'African Traditional Religions' (Ejizu, 2016). Irrespective of this saga, both camps are united in protesting against all derogatory attempts to depict the tradition, religion, and
culture of Africans as heathenism, paganism, primitive, animism, idolatry, fetishism and totemism etc. The same viewpoint is shared by Evans-Pritchard when he pointed out that African religious concepts need not fit into the Western schemes of monotheism, polytheism, pantheism, animism, etc. Thus, they should be best seen as involving elements of these schemes at different levels and in different contexts of experience (Evans-Pritchard, 1956, p. 316). Consequently, the researcher would adopt a singular nomenclature because of his conviction that a singular nomenclature does not necessarily imply a nullification of the peculiarities of religions obtainable in different historical and socio-geographical contexts. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, and other religions all retain singular nomenclatures irrespective of the different sects, belief systems and body of doctrines inherent in them. This point is clearly hinted in the standpoint that the “existence of a common world-view as well as similarities in belief-systems, ritual forms, values and institutions across the various regions of the continent, provide a sufficient basis for keeping the singular form of the name” (Ejizu, 2016). However, the term “traditional” included in the singular nomenclature of African Traditional Religion rather than designating that it is as both outdated and irrelevant to the present day Africans, or resistant to alterations, indicates that it is a religion whose beliefs, customs and practices etc. were adopted, at some point modified and later on handed down from one generation to the other.

ATR has also served as the predisposing religious background for the introduction, acceptance and deeper understanding of Christianity and Islam that were introduced into the African societies. In line with this, Mbiti observed that “although Christianity and Islam have added distinct elements to African religions, each has and continues to be adapted to and shaped by Africa’s indigenous religious heritage” (Mbiti, 1970, p. 34). It has also been referred to as Indigenous Traditional Religion. It has also been defined as the indigenous
religion of the Africans (Awolalu, 1976, p. 275). It is a religion that has been handed down from generation to generation by the forebears of the present generation to Africa—not a fossil religion, but a religion that Africans today have made theirs by living and practicing, although it has no written literature or sacred text. The oral sources of ATR according to Metuh include the myths, proverbs, names, songs, praises, prayers, formulae for vows, oaths, curses, or blessing; whereas the non-oral sources include art forms, archaeological artifacts, cult objects, religious symbols, rites, rituals and etc (Metuh, 1985). He further maintained that God, deities, spirit-forces, oracles, the afterlife, man ancestors, and etc form the object and subject of Igbo religious experience. Consequently, worship of god, sacrifices, ritual, prohibitions, rites of passage, and prayers all examine the various ways Africans express their relationship with the transcendent (Metuh, 1985). Similarly, Mbiti as cited by Isizoh opined that ATR could be located in the “rituals, ceremonies and festivals; shrines, sacred places and religious objects; art and symbols; music and dance; proverbs, riddles and wise sayings; names of people and places; myths and legends; and beliefs and customs” (Isizor, 2016). It is a religion whose historical founder is neither known nor worshipped; it is a religion that has no zeal for membership drive; yet, it offers persistent fascination for Africans, young or old. In this direction, Mbiti noted that “right from the womb, through birth, infancy, puberty, initiation, marriage, and funeral, many African societies have religious rituals for each phase of life” (Mbiti, 1970, p. 105). On the same note, Ekwunife defined ATR as those institutionalized beliefs and practices of indigenous religion of Africans which are rooted in the past African religious culture, transmitted to the present votaries by successive African forebears mainly through oral traditions (myths, and folktales, song and dances, liturgies, rituals, proverbs, pithy sayings and names), sacred specialists and persons, sacred space and objects and religious work of art, a religion which is slowly but
constantly updated by each generation through the dialectical process of continuities and discontinuities (Ekwunife, 1990, p. 1).

In the traditional African setting, African Traditional Religion and the culture of the community wherein they exist are inseparable. This is clearly depicted in the religious colorations of the values, norms and traditions of people in various communities. Whatever a person does is done within the context of a religious experience (Uninma, 2006). Consequently, Okadigbo (1985) listed seven basic characteristics of the traditional African society with variations among African communities as follows: firstly, the African attaches great importance to membership of a group, as against individual, hence the predominance of kinship and community spirit. Secondly, the African has a deep and revered belief in the supernatural. Thirdly, the African has a polygamous concept of marriage with a strong emphasis on the “community spirit” rather than the libidinal drive. Fourthly, Africans place great importance on kinship and lineage, since both constitute a sort of built-in social welfare system. Having no lineal attachment is tantamount to having no socio-political base. Fifthly, there is a clear and notable absence of a concept of absolute land on a personal basis. Sixthly, the polygny of the African has wide sociological and diplomatic aspects. It accounts for quantitative increase in lineage, and a vehicle for promotion of different kinships, villages and clans. Finally, there is respect for seniority and old age- important criteria for appointment or election to mediatory and political offices (pp. 5 - 6). In ATR, as Isizoh noted values such as family, community, appreciation of life as a gift from God, and a sense of the sacred, are deeply appreciated and lived. He further noted that giant moves cannot be made by most traditional communities without prior consultation with fortune-tellers and diviners, who ascertained the will of god and the spirits. As such it is rare to find any act, without religious explanation (Isizor, 2016). Arnold Van Gennep similarly observed that the rites of
passage are of high frequency in traditional societies which have religious worldviews “in which no act is entirely free of the sacred” (Gennep, 1960).

Ancestors are cherished and revered in the African Traditional Religion. Among the Igbos, ancestral cult is practiced in the form of veneration of people who led good lives, died and are believed to exist in the spirit-land. As Metuh noted, the ancestors are elder members of the family; as spirits, they have enhanced powers they protect their families, relate to the family members in reciprocity, act as intermediaries between god and their family members (Metuh, 1985, p. 106).

Related to African traditional Religion is the traditional medicine. Africans believe in its efficacy, knowledge of which resides with traditional priests or priestesses of gods. Holloway captured the overwhelming influence of ATR on the lives of Africans when he wrote:

“Religion was (and remains) a vital part of the lives of most Africans. For some it encompassed their entire existence. It substantiated and explained their place in the universe; their culture, and their relationship to nature at large. Religion among most African ethnic groups was not simply a faith or worship system; it was a way of life, a system of social control, a provider of medicine, and an organizing mechanism”. (Holloway, 1990, p. 37).

Sacred prohibitions are salient in African traditional religious belief. These sacred prohibitions, in Igbo parlance *nso*, according to (Metuh, 1985, p. 75) are the varying and essentially religious rules associated with spiritual beings, namely: personal prohibitions and those believed to be established by spirits associated with them. Personal prohibitions are observed by an individual who might abstain from certain foods or activities since birth. People holding religious posts in a traditional setting have more prohibitions than ordinary locals of any community, e.g. priests, diviners or kings (Metuh, 1985). This concept of sacred prohibition is found among all the ethnic tribes of Nigeria, especially Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo,
etc., though there might be variations in their respective communities. ATR till this present day still has faithful adherents irrespective of the long years of introduction of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria and other African countries.

### 3.4.1 Religious Fundamentalism in Nigeria

The historical origins of Christianity and Islam in the various Nigerian communities were not devoid of obvious challenges. These challenges later culminated in religious fundamentalism obtainable in African traditional Religion, Christianity, and Islam respectively. A literature review on the concept of religious fundamentalism, and its African Traditional Religious, Christian and Muslim versions in Nigeria, would be articulated subsequently.

Fundamentalism is a broad cross-culturally applicable concept with a variety of aspects. It is “first and foremost characterized by a strong commitment to the basic truths of certain religion, belief, ideology or conviction” (Pavlovic, 2009, p. 55). This accounts for the reason, why as a concept or terminology, it has enjoyed a vast variety of scholarly inquiries from diverse perspectives in the recent times spanning from the Twentieth century. Consequently, it would be grossly reductionist and superficially simplistic to view fundamentalism as only a mere religious phenomenon, inapplicable to other contexts outside its American evangelical protestant origins in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This rhymes with the standpoint that fundamentalism is not only a phenomenon of religions, “but also of political and ideological worldview, which in all its forms is first and foremost depicted by separation, exclusion and extremism amidst a strong commitment to the basic truth of a certain religion, belief, ideology or conviction”(Stuckelberger & Hadsell, 2009, pp. 11-12). Similarly, Riesebrodt arguing from a sociological perspective, identified fundamentalists to belong to a particular “socio-moral milieu” implying membership to a
social movement wherein “members share attributes such as religion, regional tradition, economic position, and cultural orientation” (Riesebrodt, 1990, p. 29). Such a milieu is organized through voluntary religious associations that bring together previously separated people who share a certain worldview, a common set of images arising from both social and religious contexts. Be that as it may, fundamentalism in Rieserbrodt’s view is an “urban protest movement recruited from all classes, but featuring urban migrants, the traditional middle class, the clergy, and border-crossers”. Border-crossers mostly consist of youths and white-collar bureaucrats, who are migrants from rural settings into the cities, then received a secular education and became alienated from many aspects of their rural culture, and are not modern in their worldview or ethos. For example, they have conservative views of women and their dress, demeanor, participation in public life including education and work (Riesebrodt, 1990, pp. 185-189). At the basis of fundamentalism is included a conviction, care, firm value orientation and strong ethical ties (Pavlovic, 2009). Based on a similar stance, Hadsell and Stuckelberger defined fundamentalism as “a religious or political movement or attitude with a strict adherence to a set of basic principles, based on literal, not adapted interpretation, especially as a return to former principles” (Stuckelberger & Hadsell, 2009, p. 11). It is a “two-way exchange shaped by its interaction with modernity and its reaction against modernity” (Lawrence, 1995, p. xiv).

Based on his study of three monotheistic religions namely: Christianity, Islam and Judaism, Richard T. Antoun defined religious fundamentalism as a broader cross culturally concept or phenomenon applicable to a vast variety of religious traditions at a certain point in modern history. In his words, religious fundamentalism:

“is an orientation to the modern world, both cognitive and emotional, a particular worldview and ethos, and a movement of protest and outrage against the rapid change that has overtaken the people of an increasingly global civilization at the end of the twentieth century”. (Antoun, 2009, p. xii)
Psychologists have also sought to analyze the relationship between a sacred text and the cognitive psychology of the fundamentalist believer. In view of this, Hood et al defined religious fundamentalism as "a meaning system that relies exclusively upon a sacred text”, and wherein “the structure of the sacred text implicates the process of thought constituting the cognitive psychology of the fundamentalist believer” (Hood, Hill, & Williamson, 2005, p. 6). The religious beliefs of the fundamentalists allow them to persevere in an inhospitable culture, thus creating ways for them to interpret the world, as well as their relation to the world. This process further provides the framework for motivation, while indirectly assisting the meeting of their personal needs for meaning, such as purpose, value, efficacy and self-worth. The primary criterion to understand fundamentalism according to Ralph Wood et al, (2005) is its “insistence that all of life can be understood in relation to the text”. They further proposed a generic psychological model of fundamentalism applicable to all of its forms, but within a specific socio-historical and cultural context of a tradition, best understood not only in terms of causes, but also in terms of the meaning, purpose in life, and identity it can provide for those who believe. Borrowing the Belzenian term “historiocultural approach” Belzen (2000, 2001), Hood et al. portrayed their support for the former’s claim that “psychology itself is history, and that psychological processes occur in a historical and cultural context” (Hood, Hill, & Williamson, 2005, p. 6).

Conceptualizing religious fundamentalism as a reaction to the advent of modernity, and more specifically, to the secularization of society, which has removed religion from many domains of modern life, Antoun opined that such a protest focuses on change on certain core themes which cut across three monotheistic traditions of Christianity, Islam and Judaism; bringing out their commonalities in thought and action, belief and practice, namely: “the quest for purity, the search for authenticity, totalism and activism, the necessity of
certainty (scripturalism) and selective modernity, and the centering of the mythic past in the present” (Antoun, 2009, p. 2). Similarly, hinting on this aspect of change and reaction to modernity Bruce Steve stated that “fundamentalism is a rational response of traditionally religious people to social, political and economic changes that downgrade and constrain the role of religion in the public world” (2000, p. 117). In line with the above, Lawrence listed five main traits of religious fundamentalism as follows: “advocates of a pure minority viewpoint against a sullied majority or dominant group, oppositional, secondary-level male elites”, end up generating “their own technical vocabulary which reflects “a polysemy of language by using special terms that bind insiders to one another while preempting interference from outsiders, and has historical antecedents but no ideological precursors” (Lawrence, 1995, pp. 100-101).

3.4.2 Fundamentalism in African Traditional Religion

The caption fundamentalism in African Traditional Religion would trigger doubts on its possibility since it does not fit into any of the aforementioned definitions- it does not have any sacred text because of its reliance on oral tradition. However, if the text is to be deconstructed to include oral traditions, then one can talk of fundamentalism in African Traditional Religion. More so, its adherents during the colonial era resorted to violent protest and wars in order to resist the introduction of Christianity into their communities.

Historically viewed, centuries before the advent of Christianity and Islam, African Traditional Religion or Indigenous Religion was the only obtainable religion in the various clans making up the groups of villages and towns, that later became States under the Federal Constitution of Nigeria. Its doctrines, rituals and practices, derogatorily termed paganism, animism, totemism, primitive, fetishism etc., initially served to unite the clans, villages and towns belonging to various tribes, and bequeath them with rituals, traditions and customs. It
also had a great influence on the identity formation and socio-political organization of the villages, towns, kingdoms, and communities. Dispute and crisis resolutions were also made within the ATR platform, performed either by traditional priests or diviners. However, some aspects of these traditions and customs were at first condemned and completely abandoned, whereas others were later revised and introduced with the advent of Christianity and Islam, in order to meet the demands of Nigerian converts to these aforementioned religions. This sparked chords of disunity, and sometimes violent clashes leading to loss of lives and property, among members of the same clan, community, tribe, and in the present parlance, Nigerian nation. It also led to an unavoidable struggle for religious space in the Nigerian context which became intense with the revival crusades by Christians and Islamist projects to gain converts— with emphasis on getting them indoctrinated within the religious traditions the converts professed.

Due to limited space, the researcher would focus only on the aspect of culture conflict which arose from the introduction of Christianity and Islam into Nigeria. In the 1800s, missionaries adopted the strategy of Christian villages in the Western and South-Eastern part of Nigeria as missionary strategies and evangelization platform to gain converts. These Christian villages were initially not welcomed by various communities for many reasons, especially because of the new codes of conduct and doctrines imparted on the converts. These European missionaries brought about new housing styles, socio-political structures, new codes of conduct, doctrines, values and worldview different from those obtainable in the Traditional African setting. It separated the catechumens from the rest of their clans and communities. It also provided a haven for "the freed-slaves, the outcasts, breach-babies, runaway slaves, and the flotsam and jetsam outlawed by violations of Igbo customs and traditional laws" (Obi, 1985, pp. 22 - 24).
Chinua Achebe, in Chapter Eighteen of his novel *Things Fall Achebe* described the crisis Christian missionaries had in the town of Mbanta. The locals allowed the missionaries to set up their church on an evil forest because it was “a fitting home for undesirable people”. This new Christian church, contrary to the local tradition obtainable then, welcomed twins and admitted outcasts *Osu*, who were dedicated to gods and could not freely associate with free-borns of Mbanta. It was one of these outcast-converts, named Okoli, who committed a taboo by killing the sacred python, believed to be the emanation of the god of water by the people of Mbanta. This resulted in a conflict that made the Mbanta people to exclude these Christian converts from the “life and privileges of the clan”, one of which is the access to fetch water from the stream. However, because of Okoli’s death, the villagers removed the ban, believing that the gods have fought their cause for the killed python (Achebe, 1958, pp. 108-114). Although the above scenario was extracted from a novel, it was the status quo in most parts of Nigeria in the earliest stages of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria.

In the Eastern part of Nigeria, for instance, the status of ATR was greatly affected, in the early years introducing Christianity into the Nigerian religious scene. Most of the religious rites, rituals, socio-political organizations, methods of settling dispute, land ownership and disciplinary measures, initially done on ATR platform, were given derogatory terms and totally condemned by the missionaries. ATR adherents have always protested against the killing or destruction of totem animals, trees and objects by Christians and Muslims. The Igbo ATR adherents in the Eastern part of Nigeria consider the destroying of totem animals such as *eke* (Boa) and *udene* (vulture) by the Anglicans and other Christians as abominations. In the late 1800s, Nnewi people in protest to the killing of totem animals withdrew their children from CMS schools and put them in the Catholic schools (Nwosu, 1985, p. 110).
More so, the priestly role of the male offsprings in the ATR setting, who had to lead
the daily ritual of pouring libation and praying to the gods has both become challenged and
changed. The authority of revered high priests of some deities and diviners, from whom the
Traditional rulers of each community had to ascertain the approval of the gods in all matters
pertaining to their community, began to dwindle as well.

3.4.3 Islamic Fundamentalism in Nigeria

Islamic modernism serves as the precursor of Islamic fundamentalism. Certain
historical and environmental factors accompanying the former, eventually led to the historical
origins of the later all around the globe. Maoddel (2005) gave a list of such factors, namely:
Western imperialism and demographic expansion, the invasion of cultural landscape by
various alien ideologies, incorporation into world economy, and vulnerability to the
economic fluctuations in the world market, the existence of socioeconomic inequality,
arbitrary rule and authoritarianism, the development of modern social classes, the rise of a
new middle class- and the expansion of institutions of higher learning (Maoddel, 2005, pp.
27, 196). These factors mentioned above fit into the broad categories of the Great
Depression, and the Great Western Transmutation (GWT), which led to the rise of Pan-Arab
nationalism. However, with the twin happenings of the Iranian revolution led by Ayotollah
Khomeini, and the September 9/11 attacks, Islamic fundamentalism has recently gained a
much more wider global attention in the media and attracted scholarly inquires, similar to
those of its counterparts namely: Christian, Hindu, Silk, Jewish, Amish etc. Lawrence
captured the above point when he wrote:

"The broad use of the term "fundamentalism" is directly linked to its
innovation to describe events that happened in the postcolonial Muslim
world, specifically in Iran. It has become a contemporary slogan popularized
by journalistic despair in the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian revolution".
(Lawrence, 1995, p. xii)
Lawrence further held that religious fundamentalism, in this case Islamic fundamentalism, was “the answer to the question raised in Iran; Does religion still count in the public arena? Can it sway interest groups and national ideologies?” (Lawrence, 1995). Khomeini’s revolution was not merely political by being a revolt against the autocratic and cruel regime of the shah and the economic crisis, but it was “a rebellion against the secularist ethos which excluded religion and which many ordinary Iranians felt was being imposed upon them against their will” (Armstrong, 2000, pp. 302-303). Consequently, borrowing Lawrence’s phrase, I would describe Islamic fundamentalists as “anti-modernist moderns” (Lawrence, 1995, p. xiv), because they utilize the benefits and products of technology and modernity, but oppose the ideological norms of the high tech era. On the same note, Hood et al. are of the view that it is a misconception to attempt a definition of Islamic fundamentalism in terms of suggesting that its opposition to what it rejects is always violent or militant (Hood, Hill, & Williamson, 2005, p. 9). Hinting on the concept of selective modernity, they opined that both Islamic fundamentalism and Protestantism selectively oppose different aspects of modernity and selectively utilize different means, only some of which are violent (Hood, Hill, & Williamson, 2005, p. 6).

A reading of vast literature on religious fundamentalism indicates a preference for the use of Islamism as against Islamic fundamentalism by some Muslim scholars, the reason being that the latter often connotes images of violence and terrorism streaming from religious extremism and fanaticism. Fuller (1999) as cited by Mahmud (2004) noted that Islamism refers to “an effort to draw meaning out of Islam applicable to problems of contemporary governance, society, and politics”. Mahmud maintained that this definition “captures some aspects of other concepts related to Islam such as political Islam, fundamentalism, revivalism, and renewal” (Mahmud, 2004). It also highlights the relevance of Islam in Northern Nigeria.
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despite the dynamism of the nature of Islamism in response to changes arising from socio-political and religious processes on the local and national levels, respectively. Islamism in Northern Nigeria ought to be primarily understood as being determined by local conditions, namely: “the competition for spiritual and political influence in the region and the demands of Nigerian politics at the national level” (Mahmud, 2004).

The founding of the Sokoto caliphate in 1804 was one of the initial efforts to propagate Islam and Islamic identity in Northern Nigeria. It provided the platform for Islam to “assume a public role in Northern Nigeria- serving as the source of identity and a medium of competition for resources and political powers” (Mahmud, 2004). It also served as the basis to promote the hegemony of a ruling class prefixed on the veneer of Islam (Tanko, 2008, p. 113). The jihad of Uthman Dan Fodio sped up the establishment of the ethnic Fulani group and its hegemony over Hausa land in Northern Nigeria. By the time of the independence, it has become a full blown political phenomenon in the Northern part of Nigeria. Another solidifying factor of this hegemony is the policy of ‘indirect rule’ set up by the British right after the amalgamation of Southern and Northern protectorates. Such a policy bestowed self-government on the emirs and technically prevented Christian missionaries from carrying out their evangelical works in the Northern part of Nigeria. It further extolled Dan Fodio’s legacy, as Tanko wisely noted, the date for the celebration of the self-government coincided with the anniversary of Uthman Dan Fodio’s conquest of Sokoto caliphate, whereas the date mapped out for the formal declaration of the Northern People’s Party (NPC) coincided with the anniversary of the formal declaration of the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) as the official political party for the Northerners. Thus with reference to Kukah’s position, an impression was made on the Hausa-Fulani that Dan Fodio’s legacy was to remain the reference point for Nigeria’s policy and his legatees are forever the rulers of the Nigerian nation (Tanko, 2008, p. 112). Nowadays, the Hausa-Fulani hegemony
still bears a strong hold among the Northern ruling elites of Nigeria as it is the basis of political appointments in the Northern states. Nevertheless, with the advent of colonialism came Christianity, the formation of a nation, and the creation of new states; the Islamic structure in the North gradually started experiencing subtle changes. The initially seeming exclusive Muslim communities began to lose grip of the identity and cultural unity of their inhabitants, who gradually became exposed to the preaching of Pentecostal evangelists initially confined to stay at Sabon Gari (strangers' quarters in the outskirts of ancient Northern cities), and the violent Islamist sectarian leaders like Muhammed Marwa. Whereas the Pentecostal groups saw Islam as evil and were filled with charismatic zeal in their non-violent religious crusades and revivals to convert (win) souls for God; Marwa, on the other hand, held that Islam has been flawed by Western modernization and the formation of modern states. He also criticized established institutions like the emirs, the ulama and ruling elites of the Northern states on grounds of corruption and exploitation of the poor masses - a development which led to his expulsion from Kano. Worse still, the hopes of having a united north gradually started becoming a mirage; such that the emirs and the ulamas (a clergy consisting mainly of the tariqas belonging to the Sufi orders of Qadiriya and Tijaniya) who had great political and religious influence on the Northern Nigerian populace, became irritated by this development.

In 1960, Late Sir Ahmadu Bello, who was then both the premier and sultan of the Sokoto Caliphate, used his position to foster Islamism in the Northern Nigeria. He sought for and got financial aids from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, built many Islamic schools, and later established the first Islamic Advisory Committee to mediate between the Tariqas and the Izala groups, who were competing over whose “interpretation of symbols and control of the institutions, formal and informal which produce and sustain them” would have greater influence on the Muslim population in Northern Nigeria (Mahmud, 2004 ). Sir Bello’s
Islamism project was slowed down during the Nigerian Civil War, popularly known as the Biafran war, which lasted from 6th July, 1967 to 15th January, 1970. This was as a result of the Igbo ethnic group that wanted secession from the Nigerian government believed to be hugely controlled by Northern-elites. A few years after the war, a majority of the states in Northern Nigeria and a variety of radical Muslim sectarian groups started demanding for a Federal Sharia Court of Appeal after its failed attempt to be enshrined in the 1979 Federal Constitution of Nigeria. In the same year, the Yan Izala (a radical Muslim student Society) attacked Ahmadu Bello Univeristy campus in 1979. Another radical group called the Maitatsine later emerged, and was responsible for many violent uprisings in the Northern states in the 1980s which brought about large scale destruction of lives and property. Boko Haram is another popular sect recording its bloodiest sectarian violence in July and August 2009, especially in the capital of Borno state which is Maiduguri. Records of their attacks from the past to the present Nigeria still exist.

Finally, it is pertinent to note that it was not until January 2000, that Islamism had its highest expression in the enactment of full Sharia in Zamfara state, a move that was followed by eleven other Northern states. This brought about a demarcation of Nigeria into Sharia and non-Sharia states depicting an “intentional territorialization of Islam, and a veritable attempt to demarcate sacred places and boundaries against infidels (non-Muslims)” (Nmah & Amunnadi, 2011). It ushered in a new dispensation wherein Islam acquired the status of a State religion, and a compulsory compliance to the demands of the Sharia became emphatic-the obvious presence and impact of the Muslim hisbah (local Islamic police) to ensure strict adherence to the Sharia in the Muslim communities existing in the Sharia states of Northern Nigeria, is strongly felt. They account for the reason why women in most of the Muslim communities in the northern part of Nigeria are reluctant to engage in a dialogue. Also, the attempts made by some civil societies like the Women’s Aid Collective (WACOL) to
revolutionize or deconstruct extreme conservative Muslim positions have always been met with enormous challenges and risks. In this regard, Sokoto state is the most conservative of the Northern Muslim societies, and their women are the most reluctant to come out in public, and were closed to dialogue (Ezeilo, 2006).

Contrary to the popular view that Islamic fundamentalism is characterized by extreme violence amidst a rejection of Western system of education and politics, Albert I.O. (2011) asserted that the Islamic fundamentalists arose out of the grassroots responses to bad governance in Nigeria, precisely from the abandoned Sharia projects initiated by the governors in some of the Northern states of Nigeria (p. 1). These Islamic fundamentalists, who initially promoted the adoption of Sharia in the northern states, acquired religious and political significance, that they were stripped off of, shortly after eleven states in the northern part of Nigeria enacted the Sharia- they were tagged enemies of these northern states for preaching against the corrupt practices of some governors in the Northern states of Nigeria.

3.4.3 Christian Fundamentalism in Nigeria

Pentecostalism, charismaticism and conservative-Evangelicalism are according to James Barr, the three main forms of Christian fundamentalism (Barr, 1994, p. 132). These forms of Christian fundamentalism arose from their American contexts and spread to other parts of the globe, Africa inclusive. The 19th century witnessed the rise of revivalism, in which American masses were converted and religious excitement sporadically grew in certain parts of America. This was evident in the revivals, missions, evangelism, and social work which became common in the American public life (Hood, Hill, & Williamson, 2005, p. 51). These revival fundamental Christians engaged in a wider scale missionary acts resulting in the formation of “new missionaries, new churches, increased media involvement and the perpetual crusades” in many African cities and countries (Gifford, 1991, p. 2). Steve Brouwer, et al. also offered a classification of Christian fundamentalism into two groups
naturally: the “book-centered ‘rational’ fundamentalism”, exemplified by conservative-Evangelism, and “experience-centered charismatic and Pentecostal Fundamentalism”. Such a classification was based on their analysis of Pentecostals as a group of Christians who “have transformed and energized the experience of worship while also adopting strong fundamentalist loyalties to Biblical inerrancy, creationism, and millenialist dispensationalism” (Brouwer, Gifford, & Rose, 1996, p. 5). However, in opposition to the views of Brower et al., David Martin maintained that “what makes a group Pentecostal or charismatic is its practice of the free and democratic availability of the gift of the Spirit rather than a certain doctrine of the Bible” (Martin, 1996, p. 10).

In the Nigerian context, Christian fundamentalists either belonging to the conservative, evangelical, charismatic or Pentecostal groups, are characterized by their strong loyalties to biblical inerrancy, a charismatic leader, creationism and millenialist dispensationalism, as well as an avid emphasis on the divine mandate to convert and win souls for Christ, and the practice of free and democratic availability of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Based on his field work in Africa, Gifford (1991) similarly opined that dispensationalism and Faith Gospel (prosperity gospel on health and wealth based on the dual notions of the world as evil and human dualism) standout as the main characteristics of Christian fundamentalism in Nigeria. The fascination and flourishing of this trend among adherents in Nigeria, according to Gifford (1991) was linked to the preponderance of themes such as plagues, famines, and all kinds of disasters, drawn from the apocalyptic Biblical books, and interpreted to designate all kinds of hardship and deprivation as revelations of the end-times predestined by God. Consequently, Gifford observed that such a way of thinking “engenders passivity and resignation in the face of poverty, sickness, and deprivation”, and promotes “an interpretation of suffering to designate a sign of blessedness” (Gifford, 1991). He also vehemently maintained that fundamentalist Christianity in Nigeria actively
disempowers its adherents by luring them into downplaying the importance of development, or even in some cases dismissing it as irrelevant. Defining Christian Socialism as “a well rooted and more empowering version of Christianity” which advocates and materially supports “the human person in its totality in this life”, Gifford concluded that it forms the basis of the social consciousness of development, especially among Christian NGOs in Nigeria and other African countries (Gifford, 1991, p. 2).

Similarly, Christian fundamentalism in Nigeria has been defined as a pluralistic moral maxim which is based on selected gospels and epistles centering on being “born again”, and the avoidance of illicit sexual relationship (Nmah & Amunnadi, 2011). Hinting further, they held that it is a “reaction against the ecclesiastical spiritual barrenness, unemployment, economic deprivation, tribalism, religious bigotry, the corruption of the secular government, social injustice, moral decadence, and the like” (Nmah & Amunnadi, 2011). They also opined that dispensationalism, premillennialism, and the Princeton theologians stand out as the three main factors that fostered the growth of fundamentalism in America, and later in Nigeria. The American dispensationalists and the Princeton theologians summed up the core points they held to be fundamental to the Christian faith, namely:

“verbal inerrancy of the scripture, Christ’s deity and virgin birth, the bodily physical resurrection of Christ or the belief that Jesus died to redeem humankind, and the physical return of Christ or second coming of Jesus Christ to initiate his thousand year rule of the earth, which came to be known as the millennium”. (Nmah & Amunnadi, 2011)

These above factors as Nmah and Amandi maintained, either directly or indirectly influenced the emergence of the Bible or theological colleges in Nigeria such as: Trinity (Union) Theological College, Umuahia, Trinity College of Ministerial Arts, Aba, Methodist Theological Institute Umuahia, Methodist Theological Institute, Sagamu, Theological College of Northern Nigeria, TCNN, Bukuru, Missionary Seminary of St. Paul, Abuja, School of Ministry Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, Lagos; and International Bible
Training Center, Enugu and Lagos for Deeper Life Bible Church of Nigeria among others. Another obvious factor that ushered in Christian fundamentalism in Nigeria is the social phenomenon of Cultural Nationalism which led to the founding of the United Native African Church in Lagos in August, 1981. This church as Mudimbe observed "accepted polygamy and other traditional institutions which was judged compatible with the universal tenets of Christianity, held services in vernacular and wrote African hymns and songs (Okonkwo, 1998, p. 257).

Nmah & Amunnadi (2011) further held that other aspects of fundamentalism in the Old and New Testament parts of the Holy Bible informed the consciousness and the later galvanization of the growth of Christian fundamentalism in Nigeria. The Old Testament Biblical account of the revolt of Mattathias and his sons (1 Macc. 2: 15-25), and the New Testament Pauline fundamentalist credo of "salvation by grace through faith" both serve as role models to some Christians in Nigeria, and led to the formation of the Methodist Evangelical Movement, Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion, Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Watchman Charismatic, Scripture Union Nigeria, Christian Association of Nigeria, Christian Council of Nigeria, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria and so many similar groups operating in Nigeria (Nmah & Amunnadi, 2011, pp. 330-331).

At this juncture, there is a need to hint on a significant historical paradigm shift that occurred among Christians in Nigeria in the 1970s. It was a period characterized by obvious spiritual rejuvenation and revival programs, wherein New Religious Movements (NRMs) sprang up and intensified their missionary strategies nationwide, even in areas initially thought and held to be exclusively Muslim enclaves. Accompanying such spiritual rejuvenation was the influx of protestant literature into the Nigerian tertiary institutions, and the subsequent series of crusades and revival by preachers from America and beyond. The emphasis then was on evangelization as an urgent task of Christians in order to prepare for
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Christ’s return (Gifford, 1991). Accompanying such an ideology was a nationwide exclusivist theology of difference - some Christians in the bid to express their zeal to evangelize, characterized both African Tradition Religion (A.T.R.) and Islam as evil, such that the conversion of their adherents became imminent. Shrines were burnt and the media was greatly utilized to spread their messages. In 1990, Reinhardt Bonke urged the participants of his crusade to preach in order to win souls from Satan. His scheduled crusade for the next year was cancelled due to the protest from Muslim youths in Kano. These Muslim youths inspired by the Northern elites considered the strategies used for creating awareness for this campaign by these Pentecostals’ campaign that involved usage of aggressive language and a gross insensitivity to religious sentiments of the Northern states, who were their host communities were.

The adherents of these NRMs also sought after an African Christianity that captures, respects, and promotes in concrete expressions, an adaptation of the Christian message in the context of their Lebenswelt, indigenous cultural worldview, values and norms. They also yearned for an Africanized Christian clergy and “emotional and expressive Christian spirituality” which led to emergence of what most Nigerians call “mushroom churches” (Nmah & Amunnadi, 2011). In addition, Ekwensi (1974) also noted that many prayer-prophetic-healing houses sprang up as support mechanisms and means of “surviving the peace”. However, the emphasis was on satisfying the yearn for the external signs of the Holy Spirit “in areas of life such as material prosperity, protection from enemies, speaking in tongues, healing and so on” (Nmah & Amunnadi, 2011). C.S. Ola also noted that the African Independent churches pulled out of the mainstream Christian churches because of some reasons, namely: they protested the unbefitting treatment meted out on Bishops Ajayi Crowther and James Johnson by the English clergy, the enforcement of monogamy as the sole option of marriage for church members, the command to divorce second or third wives
as a pre-condition to receiving the Holy Communion, the yearning for democracy and self
government, their fondness for the Nigerian clergy (Ogunrinade & Ogbole, 2013).

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter serves to articulate the historical origins of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria, while indicating the conflict of values; the need to blend values faced by Nigerians who converted to either Islam or Christianity, as some of their African Traditional Religious worldviews and practices were challenged, abhorred, dismissed, or blended into their new religion and identities- a position held by Edward Blyden, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Matthew I. Nwoko, Izu Marcel Onyeocha and Areoye Oyebola. It has also highlighted the factors accounting for the failure and success of the vanguards of Islam and Christianity in the Nigerian context, and of the strategies they used in introducing and promoting these religions in the Nigerian context, from the past till the present. It has also indicated the reaction of both Islam and Christianity to pre-Islamic and pre-Christian practices in Nigeria prior to and after her independence, up to the present time, and the socio-political and cultural changes accompanying their introduction into the Nigerian socio-political and religious scene. Lastly, offering a literature review on the definition of the term fundamentalism, this chapter has also showed how religious competitiveness culminating in religious extremism, bigotry and violence has bequeathed the modern Nigerian state with an acute and debilitating dynamic of national crises- highlighting the need for an intellectual revolution to provide a basis for reassessing the meaning of communities, and for fostering cultural synthesis aimed at promoting unity, pluralism and tolerance, and curbing the politicization and manipulation of the religious identities of the multi-ethnic Nigerian citizens.
CHAPTER IV

DISCOURSES ON AFRICAN IDENTITY AND RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM-
A RETHINK

4.1 Introduction

Centuries after the co-existence of Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religion in Nigeria, and decades of gaining her independence, the fundamental question still remains: What delineates the communal Weltanschauung of the Nigerian citizens whose religious and regional identities and sensibilities seem to have been manipulated and utilized to promote fundamentalism? Arguing for an intellectual revolution, as against social revolution, the researcher seeks to ascertain the possibility of a deeper analysis of the religious phenomenon in the Nigerian context to act as a resistance to extremism. Revolutionary violence perhaps is no longer effective because it is controlled by both inside and outside forces, and it fuels ethnic and religious conflict. The philosophical question now remains how the phenomenology and practices of African identity can continue to operate in the global age. This is important because now many cultural conflicts and fundamentalism are orchestrated by the outside and inside structures that writers like Blyden, Senghor and Nkrumah recognized. A better understanding of African identities, values and self-worth, especially on the basis of religion, can be useful in resisting these impositions of identity. The researcher is hopeful that such a hermeneutical stance can help re-awaken the moral consciousness of Africans as they perennially attempt to delineate what constitutes their communal Weltanschauung, and enable them to resist the manipulation and exploitation of their religious and regional sensibilities and identities by outside and inside forces that tend to embrace extremist fundamentalist worldviews.
4.2 Cultural Synthesis in African Identity and Community

The proponents of the discourse on African identity implicitly called for reconciliation of the contradictions in the modern African society deriving from the conflict of conscience and values which was caused by colonialism, Euro-Christian, Muslim, and Marxist socialism in their theories. My fascination with this theme of cultural synthesis comes from the fact that although such a theme was originally situated in the colonial and post colonial contexts, and out of a reaction to the anti-racism philosophy that flourished in that era, it is still a relevant to the present day Nigerians who now experience the violence streaming from religious fundamentalism and ought to adopt cultural synthesis as an antidote. It also implies, using Isaiah Berlin’s concept, the “pluralism of culture”, which in extension touches the philosophical questions of identity, rights and liberties, and fundamental human equality of human beings. Interestingly, it is also shows how religion contrary to Modernity’s reductionism as a private or personal affair, has become a strong basis for people to elicit values that delineate their communal worldview and assert their identity. A brief articulation of the significance of cultural synthesis as regards African identity by some African scholars would be subsequently attempted.

The task of Africans in the face of cultural chaos they find themselves today is according to Aime Cesaire is to "set the demiurge free. He is the only one able to bring about a new synthesis from this chaos: a new synthesis, which deserves to be called culture. This synthesis-culture will reconcile and overcome the opposition between the old and the new" (Cesaire, 1965, p. 205). Similarly, Nkrumah through his theory of philosophical consciencism called for a purposeful attitude of the African’s experience of Westernism, Christianity, and Islam in order to “enable African society to digest the Western and the Islamic and the Euro-Christian elements in Africa, and develop them in such a way that they fit into the African personality” (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 79). Senghor, in line with this, defined Negritude as “the
whole complex of civilized values-characteristic of the black peoples, or more precisely, the Negro-African world” (Senghor L., 1965, p. 43). Nyerere also shared this thesis of the synthesis of culture as the basis of African personality. Convinced that *ujamaa socialism* “is an attitude of mind needed to ensure that people care for each other” (Nyerere, 1968, p. 1), which aims at a rational synthesis of the social structure into which man fully realizes himself (Njoku, 2002, p. 272); Nyerere held that such a synthesis is done based on African values, one of which is the extended family. Nwoko also shares Nyerere’s conviction on extended family. His coinage of the term “universal consanguinity” is based on his conviction that African values were derived from their extended family system; the sense of religion or the spiritual is fundamental to African socialism; and that “all men share a common blood despite color, race, religion” (Nwoko, 1985, p. 34). Thus “it is only by assimilating positive values that [African Socialism] does not have that it grows to a higher social system, [which] it does by ever continuous exposition, examination and re-acceptance of the genuine values of African society in constant dialogue with other civilizations” (Nwoko, 1985, p. 28). The theme of cultural synthesis is implicit in Onyeocha’s definition of African identity. “Whatever the semantics behind the concept, term, African personality”, he writes, “is premised on the sum total of experience of the African people – the historical, cultural, religious, political and economic experiences that helped to share their attitudes, thereby incorporating within its meaning “the sum total of African past experiences, present knowledge and future hopes and aspiration” (Onyeocha, 1997, pp. 113 - 114). Such an attempt to sum the African’s past as Onyeocha called for, when he asserted African personality centers on community spirituality which manifests itself in the submission of the “I” to the “We” (Onyeocha, 1997, pp. 159-160), and definitely involves a cultural synthesis. Lastly, Oyebola’s realistic pessimistic view of African identity also has undertones of cultural synthesis. He suggested that Africans ought not to “live in a world of illusion about our past”;
they ought to use whatever that is good about their past, present and future political, economical and cultural achievement “to reshape towards new goals and purposes” (Oyebola, 1982).

The above theme of cultural synthesis is also a prevalent theme in all the forms of religious fundamentalism. In the Nigerian context, Christian fundamentalists protest against the enactment of full Sharia in the Northern States because of some obvious impacts it would have on cultural synthesis and on what becomes the communal Weltanschauung of the Nigerian nation state and her citizens.

4.3 Critical Evaluation of the Discourse on African Identity

The researcher views the ideas of African thinkers used in his research, not as closed systems, but as concepts implying and demanding an on-going polemical discourse on the African reality. Hence, although the thoughts of African nationalist or ideologist philosophers can be said to be particular in intent by being philosophical concepts and theories geared towards recognition by their Western counterparts and actualizing the liberation of the Africans from the exploitative conditions brought about by the colonial rule, and as discourses on the problem of identity crisis of the Africans, they can be said to be of universal rational import since it serves as a platform for the Africans to be represented and participate in the age-long metaphysical questions of being, universals and particulars, the grounds of fundamental human equality (egalitarianism), and in the socio-political issues such as the search for a suitable socio-political order; on the separation of power and relation between the state and religion, and of the limits of the state and of the individual, which were also prevalent themes in both the Western and Oriental philosophical traditions.

In addendum, the researcher has the standpoint that Kwame Nkrumah’s concept of philosophical conscientism implies the need for a reconsideration of the crucial role played by religion in politics in the identity formation and all other aspects of the lived experiences
of the Africans in their independent African nation states- a position also held by all other earliest proponents of the modern African political and ideological thoughts such as Cesaire, Senghor and Nyerere etc. Nevertheless, in their seemingly post-surrealistic attitude, Cesaire, Senghor, Nyerere, and Nkrumah inclusive, were all united in viewing capitalism and colonialism as exploitative, as such called for a return to the communalistic traditional African society and other values and ideals it had cherished and promoted before the Western contact through colonialization. This was in intent geared towards rejecting and liberating the Africans from the exploitative and devaluing experiences of the colonial rule and to actualize egalitarianism and justice in the independent African nation states. Interestingly, metaphysical questions such as: What is the nature of the glorious traditional African society often assumed by these earliest African socio-political thinkers? What becomes the nature of these African nation states? Is there the possibility of religion becoming the only condition for cultural symbiosis and identity formation of the citizens of these independent nation states? Were all not put into serious considerations by these aforementioned thinkers.

In this regard, Nkrumah’s self revision and criticism of his works led him into accepting the existence of class struggles in traditional African society, and the need to reinstate an egalitarian, and in extrapolation, a multicultural society in the African nation states through critical and purposeful attitude of seeking how to blend the Africans’ experiences (both of the values and products of the colonial era such as Christianity and Western system of education, politics and economics, with those of the post-colonial era, during which hugely differing people in terms of language, culture and worldview had to grapple with the challenges of co-existing peacefully under one big umbrella of respective African nation states); and precisely of seeking an eclectic blend of values that could be termed African based on the religious experiences, practices and values of the African

Paul Hountondji criticized the thoughts of Cesaire and Senghor on African identity as ethnophilosophical because of their tendency to misrepresent the African reality, and exhibit a purported inferiority complex whereby Africans would only attempt to delineate their difference without going beyond that to seek for solutions that emanate from their *Lebenswelt*. This, according to him, would further lure Africans into a “passeistic attitude”, making them locked up in “an imaginary discourse with the Europe” (Hountondji, 1996, p. 63). These thinkers made claims which include the equality of Africans and class-less nature of traditional African societies—which is not true of the Traditional African society. This flaw is worsened by their weak analysis on the need to return to some pre-colonial, communal African worldview. Hountondji refers to the structure behind such kind of weakness found among the thoughts of most Third World nationalists as “traditionalism”, which means “the exclusive valorization of a simplified, superficial and imaginary blueprint of cultural tradition” (Hountondji P. J., 1996, pp. 162-163). In line with Hountondji, Marcien Towa also criticized Senghor’s description of African mode of thought to be based on emotion, not reason.

4.4 The Centrality of Alienation, Cultural Renaissance and Moral Decadence

The themes of alienation, cultural revival and moral decadence cut across the discourses on African identity and socialism, as well as the problems arising from the historical origins of Christianity and Islam in the Nigerian context- one of which is the rise of religious fundamentalism. A retrospective look into the perennial social phenomenon of cultural renaissance in African countries, particularly in Nigeria, captures these three re-occurring themes, putting into consideration the socio-historical circumstances surrounding the codification of identities of Nigerians and the subsequent conflict of values and cultures
following the introduction of Christianity and Islam in her society. For the purpose of this research, the term identity was used in the plural 'identities' to designate belonging either to an ethnic group (regional identity), to a religious denomination or faith community (religious identity), and to the big umbrellas of state and country (national identity). I would also outline the social phenomenon from three epochs, namely: colonial, independent nation states and post-independent in order to highlight the challenges posed by the effort to assert the authenticity of African personality, religion, philosophy, and to map out body of thought aimed at promoting the communal Weltanschauung of the Nigerian communities.

In the colonial era, Lord Luggard amalgamated villages, towns and tribes into the Northern and Southern protectorates without due consideration of the differences in racial identities, religious identities and languages- bequeathing her with conflict. In this time, the missionaries introduced Christianity into the western, southern and eastern parts of the country in collaboration with the Royal Niger Commission (R.N.C.) and the C.M.S (Church Missionary Society); whereas the religious and cultural heritage of northerners remained intact due to the policy of indirect rule. The R.N.C. also monitored activities of the European missionaries- providing military support in the face of fierce battle over land disputes with the locals etc., and restricting the spread of Christianity to the Northern part of Nigeria. Whereas certain values, practices and norms such as emphasis on communism against individualism, polygamy, totem animals and passage rituals etc., which were initially cherished in the Traditional African setting, were rejected by the Christian missionaries, some aspects of the traditional society were acceptable in Islam such as polygyny. However, prior to the advent of colonialism in Nigeria, Uthman Dan Fodio carried out an Islamic puritanist jihad which rejected some traditional pre-Islamic practices, and established a caliphate. With the creation of States in Nigeria, Sir Ahmadu Bello did a political jihad, promoting and pursing Islamist projects in the North-visiting Saudi Arabia and seeking funds to build many
Koranic schools, despising the Western system of education in the region. This partly accounts for the indifference towards Western education and high illiteracy level that is found today among the youths in most of the Northern parts of Nigeria. The Southern protectorate in contrast, over the course of time, cherished the Western system of education— a strategy of evangelization by the missionaries that ushered in a new elite class consisting of teachers, interpreters, court clerks etc. Sir Ahmadu Bello in contrast, reconstructed the legacy of Uthman Dan Fodio’s Islamic jihad to designate a political jihad. Being a political and spiritual leader by virtue of being the then Saradauna of Sokoto promoted an Islamism project aimed at propagating the Islamic identity in the Sokoto caliphate— getting funds from Saudi Arabia. In this regard, he founded many Koranic schools in the majority of the northern states of Nigeria.

The experience of slavery by Africans provided the background for them to rethink the whole colonial enterprise. With the abolishment of slavery, some recaptives who were now trained in Western (European) values, education and system, retuned back to their homeland to take up salient positions there. However, dissatisfied with the treatment given to them by ethnocentric missionaries, these Western-trained-elite-recaptives of West African began a movement called Cultural Nationalism. Coincidentally, since a great number of the early cultural nationalists were clergymen, their reforms centered on the church (Okonkwo, 1998). These elites in West African coastal cities of Freetown, Cape Coast, Accra, and Lagos in the late 19th Century, reacted against “the increasing discrimination of educated Africans in the church and the colonial government” (Okonkwo, 1998). This phenomenon vividly captures the above three themes underlying the social milieu that ushered in the discourse on African identity, and an analysis on the problems linked with the introduction of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria namely: alienation, cultural renaissance and moral decadence.
The first generation elite recaptives relocated to Lagos and Abeokuta, consisting mostly of the Saros, later took African first names, abandoned the Christian names given them by the missionaries, and began to wear African traditional dress “instead of the Victorian heavy woolen suits” (Okonkwo, 1998). In Nigeria, Rev. David B. Vincent took the new name Majola Agbebi, wore the African traditional dress in Europe, America and Nigeria- which earned him an international reputation as the symbol of African personality (Ayandele, 1971, p. 13). Majola further exhibited his keen interest to promote African traditional values by publishing a collection of Yoruba riddles, and began writing a Yoruba dictionary. It was around the same time that Edward Blyden believing in the universality of Christianity and the possibility of adapting it to the African culture asked the occupants of Lagos state in Nigeria, to set up an Independent African Church that’s free from control of both Europeans and missionaries. In 1891, the Lagosians founded the United Native African Church, which was different because the adherents "accepted polygamy and other traditional institutions which were compatible with the universal tenets of Christianity; and held services in the vernacular, and wrote African hymns and songs" (Okonkwo, 1998).

Summarily put, one can deduce from the Cultural Nationalism movement, the preponderance of the three themes of alienation, cultural revival and moral decadence, which aroused intellectual revolution among Africans who sought for better communal worldview to foster the formation of their identities and communities. However, alienation in this context of ought to be construed in broader terms not to simply designate attempts by the European colonialists to isolate Africans from their tradition and culture; but of Africans being alienated from their right to perform political and religious roles on par with the then ethnocentric missionaries. The aspects of cultural revival and moral decadence could be seen in the avid interest of the members of this movement to identify with their traditional African lineage- they abandoned their Euro-Christian names and took African traditional names,
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began to put on only African traditional dresses, and called for the Africanized Christianity and system of education.

Related to this ideology of Cultural Nationalism as the force of ideas for political and cultural autonomy is the obvious impact it had on religious thinking in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. As Mudimbe observed:

“A theology of incarnation was promoted with a particular emphasis on new premises: negritude and black personality as expressions of an African civilization, African history with its own symbols as a preparation for Christianity, and finally the experience of slavery, exploitation, and colonization as signs of the suffering of God’s chosen ones. The most striking feature of these intellectual positions resides in the theoretical distinction between the program of political liberation which should permit a transformation of the traditional civilization and that of rethinking Christianity [and Islam] as an integral part of culture”. (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 58)

A practical instance of such a theology of incarnation with an emphasis on African identity is Monsignor Maduka’s study of the customs and tradition of Nteje people. He carried this study during the period he was the parish priest at Sacred Heart Parish, Nteje, in order to make some initially unacceptable tradition and customs like title taking and traditional dances open and safe to his catholic parishioners- who exhibited great love for their customs and traditions. Summarizing the impacts of the reforms of Monsignor Maduka, Mkuefune noted:

“Nteje became the first town in Igboland where Catholics were legitimately initiated into the honorable traditional title-taking; where Christians performed burial celebration with full realization of the human dignity involved, without necessarily indulging in those [traditional] practices which had hitherto made them bad; where traditional dances were organized and performed proudly by Christians”. (Mkuefune, 1980, p. 16)

In the 1970s, a paradigm identity shift, as both Falola and Kukah agreed, occurred among Nigerians. Nigerians began to see themselves as Muslims and Christians, and no longer in their ethnic or tribal identity. This paradigm shift brought about the rise in religious intolerance and bigotry. As Kirk further notes:
“Nigerians started to see themselves primarily as Muslims and Christians and no longer in the Pre-1970s concepts of being (and seeing the Other as) Yoruba or Igbo, Hausa or Fulani or of first and foremost feeling themselves to be Northerners or Southerners or Middle Belters. It is then, that religion and its stubborn and aggressive rigidity which has replaced the erstwhile domain of sense of ethnicity as the ‘radix malorum’ in the politics (and hence the stability of Contemporary Nigeria”. (Kirk, 1998)

4.5 Chapter Summary

The responses to the question of African identity would be reduced to mere utopic ideologues if they cannot be made relevant to the present day Africans constantly seeking avenues to promote their communal worldview to foster unity, solidarity, tolerance and religious pluralism. They all hint on the need for cultural synthesis in the face of violent expressions of religious fundamentalism in Nigeria. This chapter also hinted on the centrality of alienation, cultural renaissance and moral decadence in these discourses, as well as the issues emanating from the historical origins of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria which sparked off an identity paradigm shift among Nigerians in the mid-1970s. It also used concrete historical events to show how the flexibility and purpose in cultural identity helped the Nigerians to resist new identities of repression, while allowing for adaption to globalization. A good example is the resentment of the cultural nationalists against the colonial missionaries in order to resist the cultural chauvinism of the early missionaries. A more current form of resistance, relying on African tradition, in order to avert the imposition of new repressed identities, is the minority groups in the northern Sharia states of Nigeria, who are agitating against the enactment of full Sharia in the 12 Northern states of Nigeria.
5.1 Introduction

As already observed in the previous chapters, an acknowledgement of the instrumental role of religion, as a platform for acquiring ideologies which influence identity is found in the discourses on the African identity. Nkrumah via his notion of a recuperated pragmatic African identity and his concept of philosophical consciencism cautioned for a purposeful-evaluative attitude to the Islamic, Euro-Christian doctrines, elements and values which bring about the crisis of conscience. A practical instance is his position that the Christian idea of original sin and the degradation of man are opposed to the traditional African perspective (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 68). Man, in the African view as held by Nkrumah, is a social and spiritual being, endowed with dignity, integrity and values- a position held by Edward Blyden, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Julius Nyerere, Matthew I. Nwoko, Izu Marcel Onyeocha and Areoye Oyebola. They also all emphasized on holism as against individualism the characterizes the traditional African society. This holistic emphasis of existence of Africans in their communities now becomes problematic in the face of heterogeneous communities sharing the same ideals of nationalism, but encountering series of violence arising from religious fundamentalism.

Nkrumah’s caution against Christianity is seen in his seeming resentment of Christian identity, which made him place his aspiration to liberate Africans (Ghanaians) above other forms of authority or affiliation, particularly as regards religion. This aspiration of his, made him strive towards establishing the basis of equality in the traditional African society on purely atheistic grounds. In a colonial situation, as Nkrumah held, two sets of actions grounded in social reality are discernible, namely: the “positive action” and the “negative action”. “Positive action” is “revolutionary” and symbolizes “the sum of those forces seeking
social justice in terms of destruction of oligarchic exploitation and oppression”, whereas “negative action” is “reactionary” and denotes “the sum of those forces tending to prolong colonial subjugation and exploitation” (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 99). Although positive action and negative action are abstractions, Nkrumah insisted that the manner of relationship between them in any given society becomes revealed through the statistical analysis of such facts as production, distribution, and income. Situating the above position in the Nigerian context, Nigerians are encouraged to promote positive actions within their civil society which symbolizes the sum of those forces seeking social justice in terms of destruction of forms of exploitation of their religious sensibilities and identities, and all attempts to impose new identities on them. The historical origins of religions as outlined in chapter three showed how traditions of the host communities were either abhorred or adapted to fit into the new religion introduced into them. However, the researcher favors the adaptation of religions (Christianity and Islam) to the localities they flourish in. The fact is that we are first and foremost human beings endowed with rationality while cherishing the sense of belonging to a community, be it secular, non-secular or virtual in a contemporary sense. Our historicity grounds our existence and experience of our identities and place in our respective communities. Since the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism arose within a religious context, I am optimistic that an effective solution to it ought to come from that same context. Nigeria is a hugely diverse conglomeration of communities under the various towns, local governments, and states making up the Federal Constituency of Nigeria. The religious identity of one religious community ought not to be imposed on all the citizens of a state- a motive behind the Islamism project. Religious leaders ought to promote the need to avoid literal interpretation of their sacred texts which would end up eroding their adherence to their indigenous cultural authenticity and uniqueness.
5.1.1 Plausibility of Intellectual Revolution

The discourses on African identity have a weakness— the impossibility of returning to some pre-colonial state via a socialist revolution. The intellectual and political climate within which most of the Nationalist thoughts arose is that characterized by an attempt to assert the authenticity of African identity, philosophy and religion, which later facilitated the independence of most African countries. The series of re-occurring violent conflicts in Nigeria, some of which are related to religion, call for an intellectual revolution aimed at returning religions to their original sources in order to curb the violence streaming from religious extremism. Such an intellectual revolution would target the civil society and civil society organizations. It would include debate and awareness on how to bridge the gap created between praxis and theory on religious and philosophical realms; provide a dynamic perspective on their \textit{Lebenswelt} in order to avert the manipulation of their religious sensitivities and identities to perpetuate and exacerbate conflicts often arising from the struggle over the right to natural resources in the civil societies in Nigeria to help. This point is captured by Odudoye's assertion that:

"The identity crisis in Africa, especially among the urbanized, the Western-educated, and the Christians, [Moslems], may be attributed to the loss of a dynamic perspective on life, which comes from knowing and living one's religious cultural history". (Odudoye, 1986, p. 54)

The dynamic perspective on life alluded to by Odudoye implies a philosophical stance and attitude which goes beyond mere blaming of the colonial forces and the negative impacts of the ideologies and practices on Africans during the colonial and post-colonial eras of the now African nation states (during which most African thinkers focused on asserting the authenticity of African identity, personality, experience and discourse). It fosters the possibility of Africans to engage in a critical and hermeneutical interpretation of their historicity, heritage, religion and identity, while seeking for suitable solutions to issues
emanating from their respective contexts, on subjective and inter-subjective realms, in the present day contemporary African nation states, one of which is the religious fundamentalism in Nigeria. Resorting to violence as means of settling dispute would worsen the already exploited religious identities and sensibilities of Nigerians. The sacred texts of Christianity and Islam ought not to be interpreted to support usage of violence either.

Related to this aspect of intellectual revolution is the need to redefine the approach religions take as they encounter each other in the Nigerian context. The exclusivist and inclusivist approaches are no longer effective in promoting the communal Weltanschauung of Nigerians. Instead, pluralism ought to be promoted within the religious and secular institutions of learning in the 38 states making up Nigeria. Such a pluralistic attitude also ought to be reflected in the basic religious instruction in the curricula of schools in Nigeria featuring the three religions of African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam. Conflict and Peace resolution studies in the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria would also foster this initiative. The media which has been used to disseminate extremist ideologies can also be used to promote the communal Weltanschauung via ads or commercials featuring top religious leaders in the aforementioned religions.

One might wonder the role African philosophy can play in curbing the problem of religious bigotry and fundamentalism in Nigeria. An intellectual revolution would not be possible without ab initio, a provision of a stance that bridges between praxis and theory. This would serve to deconstruct and contextualize theological thoughts to incorporate the African communal Weltanschauung implied in the values of solidarity, tolerance, and pluralism. Ethical issues are unavoidable since human beings are bound to encounter the other. Hence, philosophers via their unbiased rational thoughts on their respective socio-cultural and political milieus have served to come up with metaphysico-ethical concepts and theories to ensure social harmony and development of their respective human societies- the
main preoccupation of socio-political philosophy. That is to say that a philosophical stance on
the historicity of a people influences their worldview, and humans unceasingly quest for
moral values to promote peaceful cohabitation in their respective societies. Relating this to
the Nigerian context, it is pertinent to note that all the conflicts arising in Nigeria are not ipso
facto religious conflicts. Going back to the 19th Century, precisely in 1880s, the Royal Niger
Company (R.N.C.) was at loggerheads with many Igbo communities, with most of the
disputes arising from trade dispute and land (Nwosu V., 1985, pp. 6-10). Consequently, most
Igbo towns were in revolt from 1887-1888, and in 1990. The conflict was with Asaba, and
with Obosi too. From 1892-1893, it was with Aguleri. In all these instances, religion has only
been utilized to exacerbate ethnic conflicts arising from the struggle for the rights to enjoy the
democratic dividends of the country’s natural resources. Such a troubled past and pivotal
historical position at which Nigeria stands today calls for a critical examination of how and to
what extent religious discourse and praxis can either serve to extend or abrogate the rights of
individuals in their communities. Hence, the onus lies on religious leaders to expose the non-
religious basis of ethno-political and economic conflicts, and to condemn them with all
forcefulness and without equivocation (Ukwuegbu, 2008). This motive propelled Pope John
Paul II’s declaration at the World Summit of Religion and Peace, as cited by Ukwuegbu, that:

“Religion must not be allowed to serve as a pretext for conflicts, especially where religious, ethnic and cultural identities intermingle
and interface.... No one who professes faith in the almighty and merciful God can in the name of the same God dare to kill his brother
or inflict a physical injury”. (Ukwuegbu, 2008, p. 40)

Towing the same line of reasoning implicit in the above assertion by Pope John Paul
II, the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) has carried out campaigns arguing on the
sacredness of human life. In the light of the mayhem and rampant bloodshed that
accompanied the Boko Haram crisis in Northern Nigeria, NIREC released a newspaper
advert captioned “Human Life is Sacred” which was co-signed by the Sultan of Sokoto,
Muhammed Sa’ad Abubakar, Archbishop John Onayekan NIREC’s co-chairperson, and Professor Is-hag Oloyode NIREC’s Co-ordinator/Executive Secretary (Albert, 2011). NIREC also abhored Yusuf’s (Boko Haram Sectarian leader) misrepresentation of Islam, and the manner in which he was executed. Islam and Christianity are religions of peace; a rethink of the methods of evangelization utilized by Nigerian Christians and Muslims is of utmost importance. Both Christian and Islamic extremists have engaged in demonization projects, using derogatory languages such as kafirai (unbelievers). Excessive zeal has also been witnessed as regards evangelization and conversion within Christian and Islamic contexts, resulting in violent protests. Consequently, religious leaders ought to promote in their followers, a clear examination of conscience that would enable them “to differentiate with all clarity between the various dimensions or elements of any concrete conflict- ethnic, political, or economic” (Ukwuegbu, 2008, p. 40). In the Islamic parlance, it would mean the promotion of the Muslim’s right to *ijtihad*—an interpretation and free reasoning, and recourse to the *Sunna* in relation to the issues emanating from Islam in Nigeria.

### 5.1.2 Identity and Community a Rethink

Identity and community are two important inter-related concepts. The answers to the questions of who we are and where we belong vividly capture this link. Human beings perennially seek the meaning of their lives and their place in their respective communities. Their lived experiences provide them with the context to search for, adopt and readjust what constitutes their communal *Weltanschauung*. Identity can either be understood either as an individual identity or a collective identity. Each human being has his or her unique identity. However, by belonging to a particular community, they come to share the collective identity, norms and values of that community. Community in this sense could either designate a secular community or faith community. Secular communities include human groupings who such as towns, villages, political associations, states and countries etc wherein religion has
such as towns, villages, political associations, states and countries etc wherein religion has
the status of a personal or private affair. The faith communities on the other hand designate a
group of people adhering to a particular body of religious doctrine. Human beings at any
point in time belong to both forms of community and always have a frame of reference that
enables them to synthesize the values which imply their communal Weltanschauung – which
form the basis of their value orientation and strong social ties to them. In this regard, “each
social setting” according to Bauman “promotes its own kind of rationality, invests its own
meaning into the idea of rational life strategy” (Bauman, 2000, pp. 107-108). Tensions
always arise from the extent to which an individual can demand for his or her rights from the
State, and the State can exercise her power on her subjects. This depends on the apparatus set
up by the State in order to delineate the Weltanschauung and the development of her citizens.
Nigeria, as a Nation State consists of multi-ethnic and culturally diverse citizens with
different values and interests. The difference in the patterns of the communities and cultural
differences among her citizens in terms of religion, language, beliefs, norms and
weltanschauung indicate their ability to self-actualize themselves while creating their own
histories and civilizations, However, in Nigeria, politicians have utilized this aspect to stir up
ethnic and religious conflicts, one of which is the re-occurring phenomenon of religious
extremism. In connection with this Bauman noted that:

“There is a wide and growing gap between the condition of individuals de jure and their chances to become individuals de facto-
that is, to gain control over their fate and make the choices they truly desire. It is from that abysmal gap that the most poisonous effluvia
contaminating the lives of contemporary individuals emanate.... That gap, however cannot be bridged by individual efforts alone: not by
means and resources available within the self-managed life-politics”. (Bauman, 2000, p. 39)

Since Nigeria is a secular state, the enactment of Sharia in the 12 Northern states
creates a wide and growing gap between the collective sense of national identity (enshrined in
the 2000 Amended Constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria on the right to freedom of
thought, conscience and religions) with the obtainable socio-political realities in the Sharia states in Nigeria. Also, such provisions enshrined in Federal Constitution of Nigeria extol the ideals of nationalism while protecting the rights of the individual'. According to Section 38 it reads:

1. Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religions or belief, and freedom (either alone or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice, and observance.
2. No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction ceremony or observance relates to a religion other than his own, or religion not approved by his parent or guardian.
3. No religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community or denomination.

From the above citation, it is evident that subsections 1 and 2 center on the rights of an individual, whereas subsection 3 focus on the rights of religious communities existing in a nation state to provide the moral education of its adherents. As already hinted on in the chapter three of this research, governors in the northern states used the Islamists to campaign for the Sharia enactment in the North, only to abandon their vanguards. By enacting the Sharia, governors in the 12 Northern states have exacerbated the issues arising from a dichotomy of the collective identity of Nigerians, one of which is religious extremism. Christians who also belong to other ethnic groups have become the minority. There is suspicion among Christians and adherents of African Traditional Religion in Nigeria that the enactment of Sharia is a tactic to spread Islam and make it a State religion on a broader scale. It also creates a scenario that Islam is the favored religion in terms of providing most of the presidents that ever ruled Nigeria since her independence.

5.1.3 Creating Better Avenues for Enhanced Political Participation

There is a need for more cultural adaptation and ecumenism amidst intra-religious and inter-religious dialogue amongst adherents of African Traditional Religion, Christianity and
Islam. The intra-religious dialogue would aim to engage the sects in a particular religious denomination in a dialogue to boost tolerance among them. The inter-religious dialogue would also do the same, but on a larger scale. It is here that more concerted efforts are needed from the civil society organizations to curb the violent protest following the enactment of Sharia in 12 northern States. These civil societies would open up avenues for people to enjoy their liberty of constructive political participation. Engaging the society in lively debates centering on the question of Nigerian citizenship and its meaning in the face of Islamism and Christian fundamentalism that challenges the notion of collective national identity, would be a good avenue to achieve such. The Kaduna-based Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum had already begun to respond to this issue and is creating more awareness on such salient issues (Mahmud, 2004). The BAOBAB for Woman’s Human Right is another civil society organization that promotes the rights of women via improving the customary law, knowledge, exercise and development of rights under religious law. Its main preoccupation is to call for a change in some aspects of the Sharia which imply a prejudice and violation of women rights since they need four witnesses against the two needed by men, in order to prove their innocence, even in cases of rape. The key word here is moderation. The move for the adoption of full Sharia in the 12 northern states of Nigeria should be discouraged on the grounds that it presents a kind of neo-colonialism and manipulation tool for the ruling elites to spread their strict forms of Saudi Salafism, which is Wahhabism. It might play into the hands of politicians eager to make the conditions, values and norms of a particular faith community, Islam, the basis for them to suppress the cultural peculiarities of the minorities (Christians, non-Hausa-Fulani groups like Tiv and Beroms etc.), and control the propagation of the Muslim identity in the Muslim territories.

Summarily, the question remains: Are the discourses on African identity still relevant to the present day Africans? Certainly because the thinkers mentioned in this research all
agree on the need for a blend of cultural elements by Africans, particularly values from religions. Be that as it may, cultural synthesis would help Africans to delineate their communal Weltanschauung - providing them the basis to resist imposition of new identities. If that is the case, the answers to the philosophical questions: Who is a Nigerian? What does it mean to be a Nigerian Muslim or Nigerian Christian? All ought to be constantly sought after by Nigerians. The paradigm shift which occurred in the 1970s and was alluded to by Kukah and Falola highlight the urgent need for a horizon aimed at re-orienting the discourse on African identity, particularly religious identity, to the issues arising from the historicity of the Lebenswelt of the present day Africans, particularly, the problem of religious fundamentalism which acts as a neo-colonial tool of imposing identities on Nigerians both by insiders and outsiders. With such a hermeneutical frame of reference nurtured by an intellectual revolution, greater chances of political participation for Nigerian citizens, and effectively engaging the Nigerian civil society in debates and campaigns for the sanctity of life, Nigerians can avert the manipulation of their religious sensibilities and identities, and come to promote the notion of unity and solidarity among themselves.

5.2 Recommendations for Further Research

The researcher is of the standpoint that further research ought to be encouraged that promote awareness on the sanctity of human life, the engagement of the Nigerian civil society, and an application of cultural synthesis to foster religious tolerance, inter-religious dialogue, and moderation in the face of violence streaming from religious fundamentalism in Nigeria. More so, the researcher calls for further research in the area of hermeneutics, especially on how to avert the violence emanating from applying literal interpretation of the sacred texts, all in the bid to make them relevant to the present Nigerians.
REFERENCES


References


